

COMMENTARY
ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT

THE APOCRYPHA.



THE
OLD TESTAMENT

ACCORDING TO THE AUTHORISED VERSION.

WITH A BRIEF COMMENTARY

BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS.

ESDRAS TO MACCABEES.

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THE TEXT in this Commentary is a reprint of the last Edition with marginal references, published at the Oxford Press,—with the following differences:

1. Each new paragraph is headed with the sign ¶ and followed by a space.
2. When a verse does not end with a full stop, the succeeding verse is not begun with a capital letter. See, for example, 1 Esdras i. 2.

It is hoped that these features of the printing will to some extent supply the place of a “Paragraph Bible” to those who aim at an accurate study of the Holy Scriptures; while at the same time it will not interfere with the division into verses which is so familiar to readers.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE APOCRYPHA.

THE word *Apocrypha* (a neuter plural adjective, signifying *hidden*), as commonly applied by us to designate certain books in our English Bible, is probably due to St. Jerome, who, writing at the close of the fourth century, says, in his preface to his Latin translation of the Books of the Old Testament,^a "Whatever book is not included in "those which we have translated from the Hebrew, is to be classed with "the Apocrypha; and is not canonical."

This use of the word Apocrypha is different from that sense of it which generally prevailed in earlier times, in which the word Apocrypha was used to describe works composed by heretical teachers, and kept secret by them, or else books which were spurious, and therefore secluded by the Church.

The books which we now call Apocrypha were commonly termed *Ecclesiastical*, as being read publicly in the *Ecclesia* or church, though not regarded by the Church as of equal authority with those books which were written in Hebrew, and were read in the Hebrew synagogues; such as the Books of Moses, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the other sacred writings, Ruth, Job, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles or Song of Solomon.

Our own Church, in her Sixth Article, adopting the language of St. Jerome in the same preface, says that "*the other books*" (viz. the Apocrypha), "*the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners*" (*ad ædificationem plebis*); "*but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine*" (*ad auctoritatem Ecclesiasticorum dogmatum confirmandam*); and does not receive them among the Canonical Scriptures.

The manner in which the Apocrypha has been treated by the Church of England, as distinguished from the Church of Rome on the one side, and from some Protestant religious communities on the other, is a sign of God's goodness to her, and of the wisdom with which she has been endued by Him.

In the year 1546, the Church of Rome, at the Council of Trent, in

^a Prologus Galeatus, Tom. I., p. 322, ed. Paris, 1693.

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the fourth session, decreed that the Apocrypha is to be received as equally inspired with the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, and she pronounced an anathema on all who do not receive it as such.

In this she greatly erred.

It is certain that the Apocrypha was written *after* the age of Malachi, and that the greater part of it, if not the whole, was composed before the coming of Christ, and existed in the time of Our Blessed Lord. And it is no less certain that it was not received by the Hebrew Church as inspired, and that Our Blessed Lord communicated with the Hebrew Church, which called Malachi the "Seal of the Prophets," and acknowledged that the succession of inspired writers had come to a close in His age, and that no books composed after it were to be regarded as inspired. Our Lord acknowledged her Canon of the Old Testament as complete, and set His Divine Seal upon it. The Written Word, as received by the Hebrew Church, was accepted by the Incarnate Word; it was received as the Word of God by the Son of God.

The Bishop of Rome requires all men to receive the Trent Decrees, and anathematizes those who do not receive them; and one of these Trent Decrees anathematizes those who do not receive the Apocrypha as equally inspired with those books which, and which alone, Christ received as inspired. The Bishop of Rome thus sets himself against Christ Who is the Truth, and by so doing he, who claims Infallibility for himself, not only proves himself to be in error, but he incurs that anathema which he pronounces on others, who prefer the authority of Christ, Who is God, to that of His so-called Vicar, who is a frail and fallible man. And, inasmuch as the doctrines of Papal Supremacy and Papal Infallibility are the foundations on which the fabric of the Church of Rome rests, we have, in this question concerning the Apocrypha, a conclusive proof that she is not a sound Church, and that it is a dangerous thing to fall away to her.

On the other hand, some members of Protestant Communions have desired to banish the Apocrypha altogether from their Bibles and Churches. The objections made by them to those books have been so well answered by Richard Hooker (*Eccles. Pol.*, V. xx.), that it would be superfluous to deal with them here. The Church of England receives the Apocrypha, and reads some portions of the Apocrypha *besides* Scripture; but she does not read the Apocrypha *as* Scripture. And she recognizes the important fact that these books hold an unique place in the records of God's Church, from which it would be an evil thing to dislodge them. They fill up a chasm in the history of that Church, and show His goodness to her in the interval of time between the Two Testaments, when the Voice of Prophecy was silent. Even the flaws, blemishes, and imperfections which here and there may be found in the Apocrypha, and which show that it is not divinely inspired, as the Canonical Books are, are not without their uses, in reminding us of the

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condition of the people of God at that time, and as bringing out in bolder relief and clearer contrast the unapproachable beauty and truth of the Canonical Scriptures.

The Apocryphal Books display the holy and heroic graces which He was pleased to bestow on her (especially in the persons of the Maccabees) in a period of intense suffering; and how her faith was exercised and sustained and cheered by looking back on His mercies to her forefathers since the days of Abraham, and in looking forward with earnest longing for the glories of the kingdom of Christ; and they provoke us to godly jealousy, who possess the Canonical Books not only of the Old Testament, but of the New.

The Book of Wisdom displays in language of singular beauty the blessed hope which animated the faithful Jew, of peaceful rest in death, and of glorious resurrection from the grave at the Day of Judgment; and the future eternal felicity of the saints of God, and of all who suffer for Him in this world.

That book and the Book of Ben-Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus, are fraught with rich treasures of ethical wisdom, and contain some noble passages of holy eloquence and sublime poetry.^b And the latter book (Ecclesiasticus, in ch. xlv. to l. inclusive) contains an invaluable commentary of the Hebrew Church on the principal events of Hebrew history.

The Book of Tobit presents to us a fair picture of Hebrew piety, in love for the sick and dying, and holy reverence for the sacred rites of sepulture, and for the purity of marriage, and of angelic ministry to the faithful.

The Book of Judith, however unhistorical (and, indeed, it seems to have been studiously designed by the writer to be regarded as an allegory), exhibits faith and heroism in a Woman, and was probably written in order to cheer the Hebrew Church in times of persecution (perhaps under Antiochus Epiphanes), by teaching that God rejoices to use the feeblest instruments for the greatest purposes, especially in the overthrow of His enemies and in the deliverance of His Church.

These books have a place in the Septuagint, or Greek Version of the ancient Eastern Church; and in the Syriac and Arabic Versions, and in the Old Latin Version of the Western Church. And if the Church of England had altogether excluded these books from her Bibles and her Churches, we should have made it more difficult for the Church of England to do her missionary work, and to circulate her Bibles in other parts of Christendom, such as Greece, Asia, Palestine, Italy, France, Portugal, and Spain. If we were to present a Bible without the Apocrypha to the people of those countries, they would say to us, "This may be an English Bible; but it is not the Bible of 'Christendom.'"

^b e.g. Wisdom iii., v., vi.

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Happily, the Church of England has not been betrayed by a spirit of narrow-minded and selfish exclusiveness,^c and fretful impatience, into such a position as that; and it may be hoped that in maintaining the Apocrypha in the place which it held in ancient times, and in which it was maintained by our religious and learned forefathers at the English Reformation, she may continue to show to the world an example of that charitable forbearance, wise moderation, and affectionate reverence for the past, which, under God, is the best pledge of her beneficent influence for the future, in the distractions and defections of the latter days, and a manifest proof of her being a sound part of the Catholic Church.

^c "Causeless scruples" (says Richard Baxter) "harden Papists;" and Richard Cecil well censures those who, because "Papists made too much of some things," are driven to make too little of them; "and, because the former put the Apocrypha into their Canon, will scarcely regard it as a sacred record."

APOCRYPHA.

I. ESDRAS.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the list of Books Canonical and Apocryphal given in the Sixth of the Thirty-nine Articles, 1 and 2 Esdras are called, as in the Latin, the Third Book of Esdras, the Fourth Book of Esdras; while Ezra and Nehemiah are reckoned as the First and Second Books of Esdras.

Saint Jerome (A.D. 329—420), to whose labours the Church is so greatly indebted, and who was the first to bestow careful criticism on the Latin Versions, speaks with some contempt of the “dreams” of the Apocryphal Third and Fourth Books of Esdras, which books, he says, as they are not in the Hebrew, are to be entirely rejected. They are not received as Scripture by the Council of Trent; and the Third and Fourth Books of Esdras, with the Prayer of Manasses, are printed at the end of the Latin Bibles (Vulgate), with a notice prefixed that they are not admitted among the Canonical Books, but are placed apart here, to preserve them from being entirely lost, inas-much as they are sometimes quoted by certain of the Holy Fathers, and are found in some Latin Bibles, both printed and manuscript.

With respect to 1 Esdras, we cannot say when, where, or by whom it was written. It was known to Josephus (A.D. 37 to later than 97 A.D.), who follows its mistakes and contradictions, in opposition to the statements of Ezra. Indeed, the estimate which one would form of the accuracy and sagacity of Josephus as a historian is considerably lowered by the confused and inconsistent narrative which he gives of the period embraced by the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, and the credulous manner in which he relates Apocryphal legends. 1 Esdras is found in the present copies of the Greek Version of the Books of the Old Testament (LXX.), but we have no certain information as to the time when the various books were translated; all that we can say is, that this Greek Version (the LXX.) was widely known and accepted before the time of our Lord and His Apostles, as it is constantly cited and referred to in the New Testament, and that the first portion, the Law, was translated about 280 B.C. In the Alexandrian copy of this version, now in the British Museum, this book is entitled “The Priest.”

There are no quotations of 1 Esdras in the New Testament, but several early Christian writers have cited it. It is, for instance, quoted or referred to, and apparently accepted as Scripture, by Tertullian (See on v. 1—3.); Origen (See on iv. 59.); St. Cyprian (See on iv. 38—40.); St. Athanasius (See on iv. 36.); and St. Augustine (See on iv. 38—40.).

The book is made up of the two last chapters of the Second Book of

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Chronicles, the Book of Ezra, a small portion of Nehemiah, and the legendary history of Zerubbabel. It would seem, indeed, that the original purpose of the book was to recite this history, and that the other portions had been added on, possibly by different hands, in order to give a supposed completeness to the story. The book may be divided into five portions: *a* (ch. i.), which repeats without any material alteration 2 Chr. xxxv., xxxvi: *b* (ch. ii.), which is made up of (1) Ezra i. and (2) Ezra iv. 7—24; and contains the history of the return from Babylon in the time of Cyrus, with the restoration of the sacred vessels to Zerubbabel and his bringing them to Jerusalem; after which, the narrative, omitting Ezra ii., iii., passes on to give an account of the success of the dwellers in Samaria in hindering the building of the Temple in the reign of Artaxerxes (the false Smerdis): *c* (ch. iii.—v. 6.). The Legend of Zerubbabel and Darius, which is in curious contradiction to the other portions of the book: *d* (v. 7—ix. 36.) contains the rest of Ezra, which follows on in continuous order, with the omission of the greater portion of Ezra iv., which, as already noticed, has been placed in *b*: *e* (ix. 37, to the end). The last part consists of a small portion of Nehemiah (vii. 73 *b*, and viii. 1—12.), placed here apparently in order to give some further account of the doings of Esdras.

Such a book as 1 Esdras, though in itself of little worth, is not without a certain indirect value by way of contrast to the authentic historical books. So far, of course, as it is a transcript of 2 Chronicles and Ezra, it relates at second hand a true history of the events; and as for mere errors arising from transcription in names and numbers, these may more or less be expected in any ancient book; but 1 Esdras, in its mistakes, contradictions, and its mixing together of legend and history, supplies itself the evidence to prove that it is an unhistorical compilation. 1 Esdras shows the kind of book which Jews at a later period might write and approve of; and if the canonical-historical books had been composed at a later period, they too might have been expected to contain the contradictions and confusion arising from the attempt to join on mythical stories to an authentic narrative. If the acceptance of these books had been merely owing to the circumstance that they had been received without enquiry from tradition in an "uncritical age," these books might, like 1 Esdras, be made to disclose themselves in their true character.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, I.

CHAPTER I.

Before
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cir. 623.

1 *Josias his charge to the priests and Levites.* 7 *A great passover is kept.* 32 *His death is much lamented.* 34 *His successors.* 53 *The temple, city, and people are destroyed.* 56 *The rest are carried unto Babylon.*

AND Josias held the ^afeast of the passover in Jerusalem unto his Lord, and offered the pass- <sup>a 2 Kin. 23. 21.
2 Chr. 35. 1,
&c.</sup> over the fourteenth day of the first month;

2 having set the priests according to their daily courses, being arrayed in long garments, in the temple of the Lord.

3 And he spake unto the Levites, the holy ministers of Israel, that they should hallow themselves unto the Lord, to set the holy ark of the Lord in the house that king Solomon the son of David had built:

4 *and said*, Ye shall no more bear the ark upon your shoulders: now therefore serve the Lord your God, and minister unto his people Israel, and prepare you after your families and kindreds,

5 according as David the king of Israel pre-

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1—24. The Passover of King Josiah.

With this chapter compare throughout 2 Chr. xxxv., xxxvi., from which it is taken.

2. "According to their daily courses." "Daily course" is a literal translation of the word which is given in the Greek translation (LXX.) of 2 Chr. xxxv. 4, and elsewhere. It is the word used by St. Luke (i. 5, 8.), where it is rendered "course."

3. "To set the holy ark of the Lord in the house that king Solomon . . . had built" (2 Chr. xxxv. 3.). Nothing is said in the Books of Kings or Chronicles concerning any removal of the ark from the Temple, where it had been placed some centuries before (2 Chr. v. 2.). Are we to suppose that in the evil days of Manasseh and Amon the ark had been removed in order to preserve it from desecration?

4. "Ye shall no more bear the ark of God upon your shoulders." These words seem more fitting in the mouth of David than in the mouth of Josiah. Since, however, the ark had been for some reason or other removed from the place intended to have been its final resting-place, it was not unnatural that Josiah should refer back to the words of David on a like occasion (1 Chr. xxiii. 26.).

5. "According as David the king of Israel prescribed." Compare v. 60. In 1 Chr. xxiii.—xxvi. will be found the arrangements made by David, assigning to the different families of the Levites their duties as those who should take part in the work of the house of the Lord, or serve as singers and musicians for the Temple worship, or as

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scribed, and according to the magnificence of Solomon his son: and standing in the temple according to the several dignity of the families of you the Levites, who minister in the presence of your brethren the children of Israel,

6 offer the passover in order, and make ready the sacrifices for your brethren, and keep the passover according to the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto Moses.

7 And unto the people that was found there Josias gave thirty thousand lambs and kids, and three thousand calves: these things were given of the king's allowance, according as he promised, to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites.

² Or, *Jehiel*,
2 Chr. 35. 8.

8 And Helkias, Zacharias, and ²Syelus, the governors of the temple, gave to the priests for the passover two thousand and six hundred sheep, and three hundred calves.

³ Or, *five hundred calves*,
2 Chr. 35. 9.

9 And Jeconias, and Samaias, and Nathanael his brother, and Assabias, and Ochiel, and Joram, captains over thousands, gave to the Levites for the passover five thousand sheep, and ³seven hundred calves.

porters and guardians of the gates and treasure chambers, or as officers and judges.

"According to the magnificence of Solomon." Substituted for the simpler expression ("the writing") of 2 Chr. xxxv. 4 (see 2 Chr. viii. 14, 15.).

"Their several dignities." The word thus rendered occurs again ver. 11; v. 4 (where the translation is "their several heads"); viii. 28. The word is here used to denote a subdivision of a tribe or family (compare 2 Chr. xxxv. 5, "The division of the families of the Levites").

8. "Syelus." In 2 Chr. xxxv. 8 this name appears as Jehiel.

9. "Ochiel" here represents Jeiel of 1 Chr. xxxv. 9; this is not the same name as that written Jehiel in ver. 8. "Joram" is substituted for Jozabad (1 Chr. xxxv. 9.). "Jeconias," the Greek way of writing Jechoniah (1 Chr. iii. 16, 17. Esth. ii. 6. Jer. xxiv. 1; xxvii. 20; xxviii. 4; xxix. 2;—another form of the name Jehoiachin), is virtually the same name as Conaniah, the name given in 2 Chr. xxxv. 9; the shortened form of the name of Jehovah being placed at the beginning instead of at the end of the name.

"Captains over thousands." "Chiefs of the Levites" (2 Chr. xxxv. 9.).

"Seven hundred calves." In 2 Chr. xxxv. 9, "five hundred." With this exception, the numbers of the victims offered in sacrifice are the same here (vv. 7—9.) as in 2 Chr. xxxv. 7—9.

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10 And when these things were done, the priests and Levites, having the unleavened bread, stood in very comely order according to the kindreds,

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11 and according to the several dignities of the fathers, before the people, to offer to the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses: ^b and thus did they in the morning.

^b 2 Chr. 35.
12, and so of
the bullocks.

12 And they ^c roasted the passover with fire, as appertaineth: as for the sacrifices, they sod them in brass pots and pans ² with a good savour,

^c Ex. 12. 8.

13 and set them before all the people: and afterward they prepared for themselves, and for the priests their brethren, the sons of Aaron.

² Or, with
good speed,
or, willingly—
ly, 2 Chr.
35. 13.

14 For the priests offered the fat until night: and the Levites prepared for themselves, and the priests their brethren, the sons of Aaron.

15 The holy singers also, the sons of Asaph, were in their order, according to the appointment ^d of David, to wit, Asaph, Zacharias, and Jeduthun, who was ^e of the king's retinue.

^d 2 Chr. 35. 15,
of David and
Asaph.
^e 2 Chr. 35. 15,
the king's
seer.

10, 11. "The priests and Levites . . . according to the kindreds" (vii. 9.), "and according to the several dignities of the fathers" (see on ver. 5.). In 2 Chr. xxxv. 10 we have, "The priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses."

"Thus did they in the morning." This follows the Greek translation (LXX.) of 1 Chr. xxxv. 12, where the translator has pointed a Hebrew word in a different way from that followed in the English Version, which has, "and so did they with the oxen." It is not, however, easy to see what is meant by this reference to what was done in the morning.

12. "With a good savour." The writer seems to have meant this to correspond with "as appertaineth" in the preceding clause, intending apparently to say that these sacrifices offered to God were acceptable to Him as a sweet-smelling savour. Compare the use of the word in Gen. viii. 21. Lev. i. 9. Num. xxviii. 8, 13, 24. Eph. v. 2. It should, however, be observed, that by a slight alteration of one letter in the Greek, we may read, "with good success," or "with good speed" (compare 2 Chr. xxxv. 13.).

15. "The holy singers;" see v. 27, . . . "the sons of Asaph;" v. 27. 1 Chr. xxv. 1. Ezra ii. 41.

"Zacharias." In 2 Chr. xxxv. 15 we have the more familiar name of Heman (see 1 Chr. xxv. 1.). In the time of David mention is made of a singer, Zacharias, associated with Asaph and Heman (1 Chr. xv. 20; xvi. 5.).

"Jeduthun" (1 Chr. xxv. 1. 2 Chr. v. 12. Neh. xi. 17.) is a restoration made by the English Version from the parallel place in 2 Chr. xxxv. 15; the Greek copies of 1 Esdras giving the name as Eddinous, and the Latin as Jeddimus.

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16 Moreover the porters were at every gate ; it was not lawful for any to go from his ordinary service : for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

17 Thus were the things that belonged to the sacrifices of the Lord accomplished in that day, that they might hold the passover,

18 and offer sacrifices upon the altar of the Lord, according to the commandment of king Josias.

19 So the children of Israel which were present held the passover at that time, and the feast of sweet bread seven days.

20 And such a passover was not kept in Israel since the time of the prophet Samuel.

21 Yea, all the kings of Israel held not such a passover as Josias, and the priests, and the Levites, and the Jews, held with all Israel that were found dwelling at Jerusalem.

22 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josias was this passover kept.

23 And the works of Josias were upright before his Lord with an heart full of godliness.

24 As for the things that came to pass in his time, they were written in former times, concerning those that sinned, and ²did wickedly against the Lord above all people and kingdoms, and how they grieved him ³exceedingly, so that the words of the Lord rose up against Israel.

² Or, were ungodly.

³ Or, sensibly.

16. "The porters." See 1 Chr. xxvi. Ezra ii. 42.

19. "The feast of sweet bread seven days;" compare vii. 14. "Sweet bread," that is, "unleavened bread," as the words are translated in ver. 10; vii. 14; and elsewhere, as in the Gospels, constantly. The notion of impurity and fermentation connected with leaven (see, for instance, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.), seems to have led our translator here to use the epithet "sweet" instead of the more usual rendering.

20. "Since the time of the prophet Samuel;" 2 Chr. xxxv. 18.

24. "As for the things that came to pass in his time, they were" "written in former times, concerning those that sinned," &c. That is, the things which Josiah did in putting down idolatry had been foretold in former times. Josiah was very zealous in destroying the worship of idols, and put to death the priests of the high places (see 2 Kin. xxiii. 4—20, 24. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 4—7.). That Josiah should defile the altar at Beth-el, and burn men's bones upon it, had been predicted some three hundred and fifty years before (1 Kin. xiii. 2.).

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25 ¶ Now after all these acts of Josias it came to pass, that Pharaoh the king of Egypt came to raise war at Carchamis upon Euphrates: and Josias went out against him.

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12 Chr. 35. 20,
&c.

26 But the king of Egypt sent to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, O king of Judea?

27 I am not sent out from the Lord God against thee; for my war is upon Euphrates: and now the Lord is with me, yea, the Lord is with me hasting me forward: depart from me, and be not against the Lord.

28 Howbeit Josias did not turn back his chariot from him, but undertook to fight with him, not regarding the words of the prophet Jeremy spoken by the mouth of the Lord:

29 but joined battle with him in the plain of Magiddo, and the princes came against king Josias.

25—34. The Death of Josiah.

25. "Carchamis upon Euphrates." Carchemish (2 Chr. xxxv. 20. Jer. xvi. 2. Is. x. 9.) has been usually identified with Circesium, situated on the Euphrates, where it is joined by the Chaboras; on both sides of the Khabour, at the point where it joins the Euphrates, are large mounds, marking the site of ruins. The later researches, however, of the decipherers of the Assyrian inscriptions place Circesium much higher up the Euphrates, in Northern Syria, at a spot now called Jerabis or Jerabulus, and occupying the site of the ancient capital of the Hittites. On the right (West) bank of the Euphrates, a vast mound, still surrounded by crumbling walls and towers, had attracted the notice of earlier travellers: recently excavations have been made, and some of the antiquities discovered have found their way to the British Museum.

27. "The Lord is with me." Compare 2 Chr. xxxv. 21, "God commanded me." The writer of the Book of the Chronicles seems to have inferred from the unfortunate issue of Josiah's expedition that this was not a mere boast on the part of Pharaoh Necho, like the similar declaration ascribed to the King of Assyria (2 Kin. xviii. 25.), but conveyed a real and providential warning; and relates, as an error on the part of Josiah, that he "hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God" (2 Chr. xxxv. 22.). The author of 1 Esdras, however, being reluctant, perhaps, to admit that a heathen could be thus chosen to convey a message from God, states the matter in a very different way, and would make Josiah's defeat to have been a punishment for "not regarding the words of the prophet Jeremy spoken by the mouth of the Lord" (ver. 28.). Josephus (*Antiq.* X. v. 1.) says that Josiah was urged on by arrogance, decreed by fate in order that it might take occasion against him.

29. "The princes came against him." In 2 Chr. xxxv. 23, "The archers shot at king Josiah."

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30 Then said the king unto his servants, Carry me away out of the battle; for I am very weak. And immediately his servants took him away out of the battle.

31 Then gat he up upon his second chariot; and being brought back to Jerusalem died, and was buried in his father's sepulchre.

32 And in all Jewry they mourned for Josias, yea, Jeremy the prophet lamented for Josias, and the chief men with the women made lamentation for him unto this day: and this was given out for an ordinance to be done continually in all the nation of Israel.

33 These things are written in the book of the stories of the kings of Judah, and every one of the acts that Josias did, and his glory, and his understanding in the law of the Lord, and the things that he had done before, and the things now recited, are reported in the book of the kings of Israel and Judea.

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2 Kin. 23.
30.
2 Chr. 36. 1.

34 And the people took Joachaz the son of Josias, and made him king instead of Josias his father, when he was twenty and three years old.

35 And he reigned in Judea and in Jerusalem three months: and then the king of Egypt deposed him from reigning in Jerusalem.

36 And he set a tax upon the land of an hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold.

37 The king of Egypt also made king Joacim his brother king of Judea and Jerusalem.

31. "His second chariot." This "second chariot" was, no doubt, one more easy and convenient for journeying than the war chariot.

"Being brought back to Jerusalem died." So 2 Chr. xxxv. 24, and Josephus X. v. 1. In 2 Kin. xxiii. 29, 30, it is said that Josiah was slain at Megiddo.

32. "Unto this day . . . an ordinance to be done continually." These words seem to imply that the anniversary of Josiah's death was kept after the return from the Babylonish Captivity. We may refer, in illustration, to Jan. 30, "the Day kept in memory of the Martyrdom of King Charles the First," which was observed for more than two centuries, and perhaps even now in some cases has not absolutely ceased to be remembered.

33. This reference to the acts of Josias is more full than the parallel place in 2 Chr. xxxv. 26, 27. This complete history of Josiah and "his deeds first and last" has not come down to us.

34. "Joachaz." Called also Shallum (Jer. xxii. 11.).

37, 39. "Joacim his brother." Jehoiakim, or Eliakim; the elder brother of Jehoahaz, but not by the same mother (2 Kin. xxiii. 31, 36.).

I. (III.) ESDRAS, I.

38 And he bound Joacim and the nobles: but Zaraces his brother he apprehended, and brought him out of Egypt. Before
CHRIST
cir. 610.

39 Five and twenty years old was ^hJoacim when he was made king in the land of Judea and Jerusalem; and he did evil before the Lord. cir. 610.
h 2 Chr. 36.
4, 5.
Jehoiakim,
or, Eliakim.
cir. 606.

40 Wherefore against him Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon came up, and bound him with a chain of brass, and carried him into Babylon.

41 Nabuchodonosor also took of the holy vessels of the Lord, and carried them away, and set them in his own temple at Babylon.

42 But those things that are recorded of him, and of his uncleanness and impiety, are written in the chronicles of the kings.

43 And Joacim his son reigned in his stead: he was made king being eighteen years old; cir. 599.

44 and reigned but three months and ten days in Jerusalem; and did evil before the Lord.

45 So after a year Nabuchodonosor sent and

38. There is obviously some error here, but it does not appear that we have any means of correcting it now. The Greek texts do not agree with each other. In 2 Chr. xxxvi. 4 we read, "And Necho took "Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt."

"Joacim" here may, perhaps, be intended to represent Joachaz (see on ver. 43.). Of "Zaraces" no mention is made elsewhere, and the name may have crept into the text by some mistake of a transcriber.

40. "Carried him into Babylon." In 2 Chr. xxxvi. 6 it is said of Jehoiakim that Nebuchadnezzar "bound him in fetters to carry him "to Babylon." If Jehoiakim was actually carried to Babylon, he must have returned to die at Jerusalem (Jer. xxii. 19. Compare Jer. xxxvi. 30. 2 Kin. xxiv. 6.). It seems, however, the more probable interpretation of the narrative in Kings and Chronicles, that Jehoiakim was released without being actually taken to Babylon.

41. "Set them in his own temple at Babylon." Compare Dan. i. 1, 2.

43. "Joacim his son." Jehoiachin, or Coniah (Jer. xxii. 24—30; xxxvii. 1.). The writer appears to employ the name "Joacim" to represent three names: Jehoiakim, vv. 37, 39; Jehcalaz, ver. 38; and Jehoiachin, as in this verse.

"Being eighteen years old." So the Latin, and 2 Kin. xxiv. 8. The Greek copies here vary, and the oldest agrees with 2 Chr. xxxvi. 9, where it is said Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, I.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 399.

599.

caused him to be brought into Babylon with the holy vessels of the Lord;

46 and made Zedechias king of Judea and Jerusalem, when he was one and twenty years old; and he reigned eleven years:

1 Jer. 52. 2,
&c.

47 and he did evil also in the sight of the Lord, and cared not for the words that were spoken unto him by the prophet Jeremy from the mouth of the Lord.

593.

48 And after that king Nabuchodonosor had made him to swear by the name of the Lord, he forswore himself, and rebelled; and hardening his neck, and his heart, he transgressed the laws of the Lord God of Israel.

49 The governors also of the people and of the priests did many things against the laws, and passed all the pollutions of all nations, and defiled the temple of the Lord, which was sanctified in Jerusalem.

50 Nevertheless the God of their fathers sent by his messenger to call them back, because he spared them and his tabernacle also.

51 But they had his messengers in derision; and, look, when the Lord spake unto them, they made a sport of his prophets:

52 so far forth, that he, being wroth with his people for their great ungodliness, commanded the kings of the Chaldees to come up against them;

53 who slew their young men with the sword, yea, even within the compass of their holy temple, and

47. "Cared not for the words which were spoken unto him by the prophet Jeremy" (Jer. xxxvii. 1, 2; xxxii. 1—5, &c.).

48. "He forswore himself." Compare the parallel place in 2 Chr. xxxvi. 13; and see Ezek. xvii. 18, 19. Good faith is to be kept towards "infidels and heretics;" for how otherwise can those to whom a higher revelation has been made, "Let their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven?" Compare 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

49. "Passed all the pollutions of all nations." Compare 2 Kin. xxi. 11.

"Defiled the temple of the Lord;" 2 Chr. xxxvi. 14. Compare 2 Chr. xxxiii. 4, 5, 7 (2 Kin. xxi. 5, 7.); xxix. 5, 15, 16. Jer. vii. 30; xxxii. 34. Ezek. v. 11; viii. 3—18; xxiii. 38, 39.

50. "By his messenger." If we keep the singular, the reference would be to the great prophet Jeremiah; the Hebrew, however (2 Chr. xxxvi. 15.), has the plural, "by His messengers."

51. Compare 2 Chr. xxxvi. 16; Neh. ix. 26.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, II.

spared neither young man nor maid, old man nor child, among them ; for he delivered all into their hands.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 593.

54 And they took all the holy vessels of the Lord, both great and small, with the vessels of the ark of God, and the king's treasures, and carried them away into Babylon.

55 As for the house of the Lord, they burnt it, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem, and set fire upon her towers :

cir. 588.

56 and as for her glorious things, they never ceased till they had consumed and brought them all to nought : and the people that were not slain with the sword he carried unto Babylon :

57 who became servants to him and his children, till the Persians reigned, to fulfil the ^k word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremy :

^k Jer. 25. 11.
& 29. 10.

58 until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths, the whole time of her desolation shall she ² rest, until the full term of seventy years.

² Or, *keep sabbath.*

CHAPTER II.

1 Cyrus is moved by God to build the temple, 5 and giveth leave to the Jews to return, and contribute to it. 11 He delivereth again the vessels which had been taken thence. 25 Artaxerxes forbiddeth the Jews to build any more.

IN the ^a first year of Cyrus king of the Persians, that the word of the Lord might be accomplished, that he had promised by the mouth of Jeremy ;

cir. 536.
^a 2 Chr. 36.
22, 23.
Ezra 1. 1,
&c.

54. "The vessels of the ark of God." It is not easy to say what these may have been, nor is it needful to enquire, as the words seem to have arisen from an attempt at correcting the older and better reading, "the arks of God ;" that is, the "arks" or chests in which were kept the treasures of the Temple. Compare the parallel place in 2 Chr. xxxvi. 18, "the treasures of the house of the Lord."

57, 58. "The word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremy." Jeremiah had foretold the seventy years' captivity (xxv. 11, 12 : xxix. 10. Compare Dan. ix. 2.) ; but for the reason given here, as in the passage from 2 Chr. xxxvi. 21, from which it is taken, that the land might thereby enjoy her neglected Sabbatical years, we have to refer to the prediction of Moses (Lev. xxvi. 34, 35.).

CHAPTER II.

1—15. The Decree of Cyrus permitting the Return of the Jews. The Restoration of the Sacred Vessels of the Temple.

1—15 is a repetition, with slight variations, of Ezra i.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, II.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 536.

2 the Lord raised up the spirit of Cyrus the king of the Persians, and he made proclamation through all his kingdom, and also by writing,

3 saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of the Persians ; The Lord of Israel, the most high Lord, hath made me king of the whole world,

4 and commanded me to build him an house at Jerusalem in Jewry.

5 If therefore there be any of you that are of his people, let the Lord, even his Lord, be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem that is in Judea, and build the house of the Lord of Israel : for ² he is the Lord that dwelleth in Jerusalem.

6 Whosoever then dwell in the places about, let them help him, those, I say, that are his neighbours, with gold, and with silver,

7 with gifts, with horses, and with cattle, and other things, which have been set forth by vow, for the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem.

8 ¶ Then the chief of the families of Judea and of the tribe of Benjamin stood up ; the priests also, and the Levites, and all they whose mind the Lord had moved to go up, and to build an house for the Lord at Jerusalem,

9 and they that dwelt round about them, and helped them in all things with silver and gold, with ³ horses and cattle, and with very many free gifts of a great number whose minds were stirred up thereto.

10 King Cyrus also brought forth the holy vessels, which Nabuchodonosor had carried away from Jerusalem, and had set up in his temple of idols.

7. "With other things, which have been set forth by vow." This shows the sense in which the writer understood the "freewill offerings" of Ezra i. 4, 6. The same word occurs again below, in ver. 9, where the translation is, "many free gifts."

10—15. "King Cyrus also brought forth the holy vessels . . . These were brought back by Sanabassar." 1 Esdras here follows the historical account in Ezra i.; but further on towards the end of the legendary history of Zerubbabel and Darius, which is inserted into the narrative, there is a direct contradiction to this. See iv. 43, 44, 57, where it is said that Cyrus did indeed intend to restore the vessels, but that they were in fact restored by Darius in fulfilment of a vow. Josephus follows 1 Esdras, and in like manner contradicts himself (compare *Antiq.* XI. i. 3, with XI. iii. 7, 8.).

² Heb.
substance,
Ezra 1. 6.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, II.

11 Now when Cyrus king of the Persians had brought them forth, he delivered them to Mithridates his treasurer :

Before
CHRIST
cir. 536.

12 and by him they were delivered to ²Sanabassar the governor of Judea.

13 And this was the number of them ; A thousand golden cups, and a thousand of silver, ³censers of silver twenty nine, vials of gold thirty, and of silver ^btwo thousand four hundred and ten, and a thousand other vessels.

14 So all the vessels of gold and of silver, which were carried away, were ^cfive thousand four hundred threescore and nine.

15 These were brought back by Sanabassar, together with them of the captivity, from Babylon to Jerusalem.

16 ^dBut in the time of Artaxerxes king of the Persians Belemus, and Mithridates, and Tabellius,

² Gr. *Shosh-bazar* : the first part of the word is corruptly joined to the word going before, Ezra 1. 8.
³ Heb. *knites*, Ezra 1. 9.
^b Ezra 1. 10, but four hundred and ten.
cir. 522.
^c Ezra 1. 11, but five thousand four hundred.

^d Ezra 4. 7.

12, 15. "Sanabassar" (vi. 18, 20.). The name, as might be expected, is variously written here and in the other places where it occurs ; sometimes we find it "Samanassar." "Sa-abassar," which is found in some copies, represents more closely the name Sheshbazzar, borne by Zerubbabel (Ezra v. 2, 14, 15.).

13, 14. The numbers of the vessels as here given amount to the sum stated, namely, 5,469 ; but this total and the separate numbers of the vessels vary from those in Ezra i. 9—11. The total in the Latin (Vulgate) is given as 5,860 ; in Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. i. 3.) the sum of the separate numbers of the vessels amounts to 5,400.

The Hindrances to the Rebuilding of the Temple.

16—30 repeats, with some variation, Ezra iv. 7—24. There is a considerable gap between verses 15 and 16 ; we have a narrative of the opposition and hostility by which further progress in the building of the Temple was stopped, before we have heard that its building had been even begun. Up to ver. 15 the author of 1 Esdras has followed the historical account, but now, in the attempt to combine with it the legendary story of Zerubbabel, the whole narrative becomes involved in contradiction and confusion. Thus, as just observed, we have in the passage 16—30, an account of the opposition by which the enemies of the Jews succeeded in hindering for some years the building of the Temple after its foundation had been laid, but according to iv. 43—63 ; v. 5, 7, these foundations were not laid till the time of Darius the son of Hystaspes, who gave permission to begin the work through the persuasion of Zerubbabel, by whom he was reminded of his vow (see also *Note* on v. 73.). In v. 47—65 will be found, out of its place, some part of that portion of Ezra which has been omitted here,—the account, taken from Ezra iii., of the setting up of the altar (v. 48.), and laying the foundation of the Temple (v. 57.).

16. "Artaxerxes." This appears to be the name of the king who succeeded Ahasuerus (Ezra iv. 6.), better known as Cambyses, in B.C. 522.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, II.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 522.

² *Rathumus,*
and the name
which fol-
loweth is but
an epithet to
the former,
Ezra 4. 9.
³ *Shimshai,*
Ezra 4. 8.

and ² Rathumus, and Beeltethmus, and ³ Semellius the secretary, with others that were in commission with them, dwelling in Samaria and other places, wrote unto him against them that dwelt in Judea and Jerusalem these letters following;

17 To king Artaxerxes our lord, Thy servants, Rathumus the storywriter, and Semellius the scribe, and the rest of their council, and the judges that are in Celosyria and Phenice.

18 Be it now known to the lord the king, that the Jews that are come up from you to us, being come into Jerusalem, that rebellious and wicked city, do build the marketplaces, and repair the walls of it, and do lay the foundation of the temple.

He was a Magian, who personated Smerdis the brother of Cambyses; and, according to Herodotus (iii. 67.), reigned only eleven months.

"Rathumus and Beeltethmus." Beeltethmus is the Chaldee title of Rathumus, or Rehum, the "Chancellor," or "Lord of Decrees" (see Ezra iv. 9.), written not very accurately in Greek characters; the writer here takes it as the proper name of some other person. In vv. 17 and 25, this title is translated "storywriter." In ver. 17 the writer corrects his mistake, but in ver. 25 (see *Note*) he becomes still more confused, for he gives the word twice; first translating it, and then repeating it as another proper name.

"Semellius" is, with the inaccuracy so frequent in writing foreign names, meant to represent Shimshai.

17. "The judges." The writer was misled by the resemblance of the word to other more familiar words, thus to translate the name of the people, the Dinaites, spoken of, with others who are omitted here, in Ezra iv. 9. Josephus (XI. ii. 1.) copies the mistake, "the rest that are thy judges."

17, 24, 27. "Celosyria and Phenice." The writer uses these names as equivalent to the words "beyond the river," which he finds in Ezra iv. 10, 11, 16, 17; vii. 25; viii. 36, &c. (see *Note* on Ezra iv. 10.), to denote in a general way the district W. of the Euphrates and bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. See also iv. 48; vi. 29; vii. 1; viii. 67, where see *Note*; 2 Macc. iii. 5, 8; iv. 4; viii. 8; x. 11; and compare ver. 25, where (as elsewhere, e.g. vi. 3, 7, 27; viii. 19, 23.) we have "Syria and Phenice;" and 1 Macc. x. 69.

Cœle-Syria (the hollow Syria) is thus used in a somewhat wide way. Speaking accurately, it is the narrow valley, nearly a hundred miles long, between the parallel ranges of Libanus and Anti-Libanus; but, in a more extended sense, Cœle-Syria is used by ancient writers as including the whole country from Seleucia to Egypt and Arabia, taking in Damascus and the Valley of the Jordan. Josephus (*Antiq.* I. xi. 5.) makes the Moabites and Ammonites inhabitants of Cœle-Syria, and (*Antiq.* XIII. xiii. 2, 3.) gives as towns of Cœle-Syria, Scythopolis (Bethshean, 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. 12. 2 Macc. xii, 29.) and Gadara (St. Mark v. 1. St. Luke viii. 26.).

18. "Repair the walls of it." See on Ezra iv. 12.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, II.

19 Now if this city and the walls thereof be made up again, they will not only refuse to give tribute, but also rebel against kings.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 522.

20 And forasmuch as the things pertaining to the temple are now in hand, we think it meet not to neglect such a matter,

21 but to speak unto our lord the king, to the intent that, if it be thy pleasure, it may be sought out in the books of thy fathers :

22 and thou shalt find in the chronicles what is written concerning these things, and shalt understand that that city was rebellious, troubling both kings and cities :

23 and that the Jews were rebellious, and raised always wars therein ; for the which cause even this city was made desolate.

24 Wherefore now we do declare unto thee, O lord the king, that if this city be built again, and the walls thereof set up anew, thou shalt from henceforth have no passage into Celosyria and Phenice.

25 Then the king wrote back again to Rathumus the storywriter, to Beeltethmus, to Semellius the scribe, and to the rest that were in commission, and dwellers in Samaria and Syria and Phenice, after this manner ;

26 I have read the epistle which ye have sent unto me : therefore I commanded to make diligent

20. "Forasmuch as the things pertaining to the temple are now in hand." This is a remarkable variation from Ezra iv. 14, "Because we are salted with the salt of the palace;" that is, have maintenance from the king's palace. The writer does not seem to have understood what was meant by eating of the king's salt, and as the word rendered "palace" is also sometimes used for the Temple, he appears to have made a guess at the meaning. It may be observed, also, that the Greek translators (LXX.) of Ezra iv. 14 do not seem to have been able to make any thing of the meaning of the clause, as they omit it.

25. "To Rathumus the storywriter, to Beeltethmus." The writer here falls into a mistake more complex than the mistake already made in verse 16 (see *Note*) ; for he not only mistakes for the name of another person the words used to denote the office held by Rathumus, or Rehum (*Be'el Te'em*, translated "Chancellor" in our version of Ezra iv. 17.), but, having first translated it "the storywriter," brings it in again as a proper name, "Beeltethmus." Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. ii. 2.) follows him in this curious mistake.

"Syria and Phenice." See *Notes* on ver. 17 ; vi. 3, and viii. 67.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, III.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 522.

search, and it hath been found that that city was from the beginning practising against kings;

27 and the men therein were given to rebellion and war: and that mighty kings and fierce were in Jerusalem, who reigned and exacted tributes in Celosyria and Phenice.

28 Now therefore I have commanded to hinder those men from building the city, and heed to be taken that there be no more done in it;

29 and that those wicked workers proceed no further to the annoyance of kings.

30 Then king Artaxerxes his letters being read, Rathumus, and Semellius the scribe, and the rest that were in commission with them, removing in haste toward Jerusalem with a troop of horsemen and ² a multitude of people in battle array, began to hinder the builders; and the building of the temple in Jerusalem ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of the Persians.

² Or, a great
number of
soldiers.
cir. 520.

CHAPTER III.

⁴ Three strive to excel each other in wise speeches. ⁹ They refer themselves to the judgment of the king. ¹⁸ The first declareth the strength of wine.

NOW when Darius reigned, he made a great feast unto all his subjects, and unto all his household, and unto all the princes of Media and Persia,

30. "King Artaxerxes his letters." Compare iii. 7, "Darius his 'cousin;'" 8, "Darius his pillow." Judith xii. 16, "Holofernes his heart;" xiii. 9, "Holofernes his head." 2 Macc. iv. 38, "Andronicus his purple." This mistake of putting "his" instead of "'s," the sign of the genitive, is frequently found in writers of the seventeenth century. We find it in the *Prayer for all Conditions of Men*, added at the last review in 1662, "for Jesus Christ his sake." See also the heading to chap. i., "Josias his 'charge to the priests and Levites." This error has now died out, and in several places of our version the editors or printers have corrected it. We no longer find, for instance, as we find in early editions, and in editions of the eighteenth century, "Asa his heart," 1 Kin. xiv. 15; "Mordecai his 'matters," Esth. iii. 4. In Judith xiv. 13, we read now, "Holofernes' 'tent;" but in xv. 11, "Holofernes his tent" has been left. As one mistake begets another, some have supposed that the "'s" of the English genitive is a contraction of this "his," which, as we have just seen, is merely a grammatical error of comparatively modern date.

CHAPTER III.

1—v. 6. The Legend of Darius and Zerubbabel; or, the Three Wise Sayings.

1. "When Darius reigned." The historical Darius, the son of Hystaspes, reigned from B.C. 521 to 485.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, III.

2 and to all the governors and captains and lieutenants that were under him, from India unto Ethiopia, of an hundred twenty and seven provinces.

3 And when they had eaten and drunken, and being satisfied were gone home, then Darius the king went into his bedchamber, and slept, and soon after awaked.

4 Then three young men, that were of the guard that kept the king's body, spake one to another ;

5 Let every one of us speak a sentence : he that shall overcome, and whose sentence shall seem wiser than the others, unto him shall the king Darius give great gifts, and great things in token of victory :

6 as, to be clothed in purple, to drink in gold, and to sleep upon gold, and a chariot with bridles of gold, and an headtire of fine linen, and a chain about his neck :

7 and he shall sit next to Darius because of his wisdom, and shall be called Darius his cousin.

2. "From India unto Ethiopia, of an hundred twenty and seven provinces." Compare Esth. i. 1 ; xiii. 1 ; xvi. 1.

4. "Then three young men, that were of the guard," &c. This legendary story of Zerubbabel and the Three Sentences, is related also by Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. 3.) ; but he begins the story in a different way. According to the form in which Josephus tells the tale, King Darius, when the banquet was over, awaking out of sleep, and being unable to sleep any more, fell into a conversation with his three guards, and promised to give rewards to him who should make the best oration on such three questions as he should propose. Darius, having given to each of them one of the three questions, retired again to his rest, and in the morning held the great assembly to hear the speeches.

Josephus makes an attempt to fit in the legendary story with the history, but such an attempt does but show that he is in some degree aware of the contradictions and inconsistencies in which the narrative is involved. Josephus (XI. iii. 1.) relates that Zerubbabel, who had been made governor of the Jews, returned to Darius from Jerusalem, and then renewing the old friendship which had been between himself and the king, while Darius was in a private station, obtained the honour which he had hoped for, of being made one of the guards of the king's body.

6. "To be clothed in purple." Compare 1 Macc. x. 20, 62, 64 ; xi. 58 ; xiv. 43. 44. 2 Macc. iv. 38. Esth. viii. 15. Dan. v. 7, 16, 29, in our version "scarlet," in the Greek "purple." Judg. viii. 26.

"To drink in gold ;" Esth. i. 7. 1 Macc. xi. 58.

"To sleep upon gold ;" Esth. i. 6.

"A chain about his neck ;" Gen. xli. 42. Dan. v. 7, 16, 29.

7. "Cousin ;" iv. 42. In the Greek, "kinsman." "Cousin," in older

I. (III.) ESDRAS, III.

8 And then every one wrote his sentence, sealed it, and laid it under king Darius his pillow ;

9 and said that, when the king is risen, some will give him the writings ; and of whose side the king and the three princes of Persia shall judge that his sentence is the wisest, to him shall the victory be given, as was appointed.

10 The first wrote, Wine is the strongest.

11 The second wrote, The king is strongest.

12 The third wrote, Women are strongest : but above all things Truth beareth away the victory.

13 ¶ Now when the king was risen up, they took their writings, and delivered them unto him, and so he read them :

14 and sending forth he called all the princes of Persia and Media, and the governors, and the captains, and the lieutenants, and the chief officers ;

² Or, council. 15 and sat him down in the ²royal seat of judgment ; and the writings were read before them.

16 And he said, Call the young men, and they shall declare their own sentences. So they were called, and came in.

17 And he said unto them, Declare unto us your mind concerning the writings. Then began the first, who had spoken of the strength of wine ;

18 and he said thus, O ye men, how exceeding

English, is often used in the same general sense,—“Her neighbours and her *cousins* heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her,” St. Luke i. 58. “My *cosyns* after the fleisch,” Rom. ix. 3 (*Wycliffe.*). Other instances wherein this title of kinsman or “cousin” of the king is given as a title of honour, may be seen in 1 Macc. x. 89 (“of the “king’s blood,” in the English Version) ; xi. 31. 2 Macc. xi. 1, 35.).

7. “Darius his cousin.” 8. “Darius his pillow” (see on ii. 30, “Artaxerxes his letters”).

9. “The three princes of Persia.” In Esth. i. 14 we read of the “seven princes of Persia and Media.” Compare Ezra vii. 14. In the Greek translation, however, of Esth. i. 14, only three names are given, and this may have been followed here. In Dan. vi. 2, we find that “Darius the Median” set three presidents over the hundred and twenty princes of his kingdom.

17—24. The First Sentence: The Strength of Wine.

18. Compare Prov. xx. 1, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: “and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise ;” xxiii. 29—33 ; xxxi. 5.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, III.

strong is wine! it causeth all men to err that drink it:

19 it maketh the mind of the king and of the fatherless child to be all one; of the bondman and of the freeman, of the poor man and of the rich:

20 it turneth also every thought into jollity and mirth, so that a man remembereth neither sorrow nor debt:

21 and it maketh every heart rich, so that a man remembereth neither king nor governor; and it maketh to speak all things by talents:

22 and when they are in their cups, they forget their love both to friends and brethren, and a little after draw out swords:

23 but when they are from the wine, they remember not what they have done.

Is. xxviii. 7. Hos. iv. 11. Eccles. xxxi. 25, "Show not thy valiantness in wine; for wine hath destroyed many."

20. "It turneth every thought into jollity." Compare Ps. civ. 15. Judg. ix. 13. Eccles. x. 19, *Margin*, "Wine maketh glad the life," or "the living."

"So that a man remembereth neither poverty nor debt." Prov. xxxi. 6, 7, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."

21. "A man remembereth neither king nor governor." Too much wine causeth men to "lose themselves" and "forget themselves," so that they have no regard for the decencies and proprieties of conduct, make no account when, where, or before whom they misbehave themselves, and respect not those in whose presence at other times they would stand in awe and reverence.

21. "It maketh to speak all things by talents." Wine looseth the tongue, and giveth free utterance to vanity and other weaknesses, which prudence keeps veiled and concealed. It causeth men to speak by "talents" (the largest denomination of value); not in a "penny" or "farthing" style, but in the largest and fullest fashion, to amplify and exaggerate all that they tell about themselves. Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. iii. 3), in reciting this speech, thus paraphrases the words: Wine "makes them think themselves to be of all men the richest; it makes them talk of no small things, but of talents and such other things as become wealthy men only."

22, 23. Compare Shakspeare, *Othello*, ii., iii. Cassio. "I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore.--" "O that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains! that we should with joy, pleasure, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!" Compare Prov. xxiii. 29—34.

23. "They remember not." Compare Prov. xxiii. 35.

Poets, of all times and of all tongues, have sung the praises of wine.

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24 O ye men, is not wine the strongest, that enforceth to do thus? And when he had so spoken, he held his peace.

CHAPTER IV.

1 The second declareth the power of a king. 13 The third the force of women, 33 and of truth. 41 The third is judged to be wisest, 47 and obtaineth letters of the king to build Jerusalem. 58 He praiseth God, and sheweth his brethren what he had done.

THEN the second, that had spoken of the strength of the king, began to say,

^{2 Or, have the command.} 2 O ye men, do not men excel in strength, that bear rule over sea and land, and all things in them?

3 But yet the king is more mighty: for he is lord of all these things, and hath dominion over them; and whatsoever he commandeth them they do.

4 If he bid them make war the one against the other, they do it: if he send them out against the enemies, they go, and break down mountains, walls, and towers.

Some in verses foul and licentious; others in more graceful strains have spoken of its cheering rather than its debasing effects; they have sung of it as the gentle exciter of the sluggish intellect, the soother of care, the giver of hope, the inspirer of courage. And Holy Scripture, while solemnly denouncing drunkenness and all other sensual sins, has not hesitated to speak in praise of wine, to commend its use in due moderation, and to consecrate its employment not only in the offerings of the Law (Num. xv. 7; xxviii. 7, &c.), but in the most sacred rite of Christianity, the religion of purity and love. See such passages as Eccles. xxxi. 27, 28. Gen. xliii. 34. Ps. civ. 15. Prov. xxxi. 6. Cant. v. 1. Deut. xviii. 4. Jer. xxxi. 12. St. John ii. 9, 10; xv. 1. 1 Tim. v. 23. St. Matt. xxvi. 27. 1 Cor. x. 16. In a multitude of places corn and wine, or corn and wine and oil, are mentioned together as God's good gifts, granted in fulfilment of His promises, or as the chief supports of the life of man (Gen. xxvii. 28, 37. Deut. vii. 13; xi. 14; xvi. 13; xviii. 4; xxviii. 51; xxxiii. 38. Neh. x. 39; xiii. 12. Ps. iv. 7. Hos. ii. 8, 9, 22. Joel ii. 19, &c.).

CHAPTER IV.

1—12. The Strength of the King.

2. "Bear rule over sea and land." Gen. i. 26; ix. 2. Ps. viii. 6.

3. "He is lord of all these things." "Things" is an unfortunate insertion of the translators. The speaker's argument is this: "Men are lords of all things, but the king is more mighty, for he is lord of all (men), and whatsoever he commandeth them to do, they do."

4. "Break down mountains;" Is. xl. 4. Or, "mountain" may be used metaphorically for any great difficulty, or weighty obstacle (St. Matt. xxi. 21.).

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5 They slay and are slain, and transgress not the king's commandment: if they get the victory, they bring all to the king, as well the spoil, as all things else.

6 Likewise for those that are no soldiers, and have not to do with wars, but use husbandry, when they have reaped again that which they had sown, they bring it to the king, and compel one another to pay tribute unto the king.

7 And yet he is but one man: if he command to kill, they kill; if he command to spare, they spare;

8 if he command to smite, they smite; if he command to make desolate, they make desolate; if he command to build, they build;

9 if he command to cut down, they cut down; if he command to plant, they plant.

10 So all his people and his armies obey him: furthermore he lieth down, he eateth and drinketh, and taketh his rest:

11 and these keep watch round about him, neither ² may any one depart, and do his own business, ² Or, *can*. neither disobey they him in any thing.

12 O ye men, how should not the king be mightiest, when in such sort he is obeyed? And he held his tongue.

13 ¶ Then the third, who had spoken of women, and of the truth, (this was Zorobabel) began to speak.

14 O ye men, it is not the great king, nor the multitude of men, neither is it wine, that ³ excelleth; ³ Heb. *is of force*.

5, 6. Samuel also (1 Sam. viii. 10—18.), in declaring to the people “the manner of a king,” sets forth the demands that he will make for service and for tribute, in order that the fear of his exactions may deter the people from making a king for themselves like the other nations.

7, 8. Compare Dan. v. 19.

13—32. The Strength of Women.

13. “This was Zerubbabel.” The historical Zerubbabel, or Sheshbazzar (Ezra v. 2, 14, 15; compare Ezra i. 8, 11; ii. 2; iii. 2, 8; iv. 2. Zech. iv. 9.), had been at Jerusalem since the first year of Cyrus (ii. 1, 12, 15.).

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who is it then that ruleth them, or hath the lordship over them? are they not women?

15 Women have borne the king and all the people that bear rule by sea and land.

16 Even of them came they: and they nourished them up that planted the vineyards, from whence the wine cometh.

17 These also make garments for men; these bring glory unto men; and without women cannot men be.

18 Yea, and if men have gathered together gold and silver, or any other goodly thing, do they not love a woman which is comely in favour and beauty?

19 And letting all those things go, do they not gape, and even with open mouth fix their eyes fast on her; and have not all men more desire unto her than unto silver or gold, or any goodly thing whatsoever?

^a Gen. 2. 24. 20 ^a A man leaveth his own father that brought him up, and his own country, and cleaveth unto his wife.

21 He sticketh not to spend his life with his wife, and remembereth neither father, nor mother, nor country.

22 By this also ye must know that women have

17. "These also make garments for men." As in simple and primitive times. Compare Prov. xxxi. 13, 19—24: "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. . . . She stretcheth forth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. . . . She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed in double garments." So also in Homer, the wife of the King of the Phæacians is represented as sitting with her maidens spinning the purple-dyed wool (Od. vi. 53, 306. Compare also Od. xxi. 350, 351.).

"These bring glory unto men." "Glory" here is used in the sense of ornament, adornment (compare 1 Cor. xi. 15.). The same word in Esth. xv. 1 (literally, "she put on her glory"); 1 Macc. xiv. 9, is translated "glorious apparel." The reference is to rich garments and robes made by women, in which men might be arrayed (compare Prov. xxxi. 23.). In St. Matt. vi. 29, the comparison seems to show that "glory" is used chiefly in the sense of royal robes and rich clothing.

20. Gen. ii. 24. St. Matt. xix. 5. Eph. v. 31.

21. "He sticketh not to spend his life with his wife." This phrase may be taken to give fairly the general meaning of the Greek, which is literally, "He giveth up his soul" (as in Gen. xxxv. 18.), "he dieth with his wife."

I. (III.) ESDRAS, IV.

dominion over you : do ye not labour and toil, and give and bring all to the woman ?

23 Yea, a man taketh his sword, and goeth his way to rob and to steal, to sail upon the sea and upon rivers ;

24 and looketh upon a lion, and goeth in the darkness ; and when he hath stolen, spoiled, and robbed, he bringeth it to his love.

25 Wherefore a man loveth his wife better than father or mother.

26 Yea, many there be that have ²run out of ²Or, *grown desperate*. their wits for women, and become servants for their sakes.

27 Many also have perished, have erred, and sinned, for women.

28 And now do ye not believe me ? is not the king great in his power ? do not all regions fear to touch him ?

29 Yet did I see him and Apame the king's concubine, the daughter of the admirable ³Bartacus, sitting at the right hand of the king, ³Joseph. Antiq. lib. 11. cap. 3. Rabaces Themasis.

30 and taking the crown from the king's head, and setting it upon her own head ; she also struck the king with her left hand.

31 And yet ⁴for all this the king gaped and gazed ⁴Or, *hereat*. upon her with open mouth : if she laughed upon him, he laughed also : but if she took any displeasure at him, the king was fain to flatter, that she might ⁵be reconciled to him again. ⁵Or, *he friends with him*.

24. "Looketh upon a lion." "Lion" seems used metaphorically for any great risk or danger which the man is willing to face (compare Prov. xxii. 13 ; xxvi. 13.).

"Goeth in darkness." Compare Job xxiv. 13—17.

26. "Have become servants for their sakes ;" Gen. xxix. 20.

27. Compare Judg. xvi., Delilah. 1 Kin. xi. 1—8, Solomon's "strange wives ;" xxi. 5, 25, Jezebel. Prov. ii. 18 ; v. 5 ; vi. 26 ; vii. 27 ; xxxi. 3. Eccus. ix. 8, "Many have been deceived by the beauty of a woman, for herewith love is kindled as a fire."

28. "To touch him." In a hostile sense, to hurt, to injure ; as in Gen. xxvi. 11. Job i. 11. Ps. cv. 15.

29. "The daughter of the admirable Bartacus." The name in Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. iii. 5.) appears as Rabaces the son of Themasis ; which last word is probably only a corruption of the word rendered "the Admirable," which is, perhaps, intended as an official title."

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32 O ye men, how can it be but women should be strong, seeing they do thus?

33 Then the king and the princes looked one upon another: so he began to speak of the truth.

34 O ye men, are not women strong? great is the earth, high is the heaven, swift is the sun in his course, for he compasseth the heavens round about, and fetcheth his course again to his own place in one day.

35 Is he not great that maketh these things? therefore great is the truth, and stronger than all things.

² Or, *praiseth the truth*, Athanasius. 36 All the earth ² calleth upon the truth, and the heaven blesseth it: all works shake and tremble at it, and with it is no unrighteous thing.

37 Wine is wicked, the king is wicked, women are wicked, all the children of men are wicked, and such are all their wicked works; and there is no truth

33—41. The Strength of Truth.

33. The third speaker has in one respect an unfair advantage in the contest, as he takes two subjects, and makes two speeches instead of one.

34, 35. "Great is the earth," &c. . . . "Is he not great that maketh these things?" Compare Wisd. xiii. 4, 5: "Let them understand by them, how much mightier He is that made them. For by the greatness and beauty of the creatures proportionably the Maker of them is seen." See Rom. i. 20.

35. "Therefore great is the truth." The "therefore" almost seems to imply that Truth is meant to be another term for "the Maker of all things," for God; yet Truth is not absolutely identified with God Himself, as Zerubbabel afterwards (in ver. 40.) speaks of "the God of truth." Still, Truth, as the attribute of God, and the law according to which He worketh all things, is described in terms not unfitting to be used concerning God Himself.

36. "All the earth calleth upon the truth, and the heaven blesseth it: all works shake and tremble at it." This passage is cited by St. Athanasius, in his work *Against the Arians* (ii. 20.), as the words of "Zerubbabel the wise;" and from them he proceeds to argue in proof of our Lord's Divinity, somewhat to this effect: "If all the earth praiseth the Creator and the Truth, and blesseth (Him), and trembleth (before Him), and if this Creator is the Word, as He Himself saith, 'I am the Truth' (St. John xiv. 6.), the Word is not a creature," &c.

"All works shake and tremble at it." As conscious of some falsehood, unreality, and defect; this is more fully stated in ver. 37.

37. "All the children of men are wicked." See 4 Esdras iii. 20—22; viii. 35.

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in them; in their unrighteousness also they shall perish.

38 As for the truth, it endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore.

39 With her there is no accepting of persons or rewards; but she doeth the things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked things; and all men do well like of her works.

40 Neither in her judgment is any unrighteousness; and she is the strength, kingdom, power, and majesty, of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth.

38—40. As for truth, it endureth . . . Blessed be the God of truth." These three verses, with the omission of a clause or two, are cited by St. Cyprian in one of his Epistles (Ep. 74, written about 256 A.D.) to prove the final victory of truth, "which truth," St. Cyprian adds, "Christ 'showing unto us, said in His Gospel, 'I am the truth'" (St. John xiv. 6.). He prefaces his quotation with the words, "as it is written in Esdras."

St. Augustine also accepts Esdras as Canonical, but hesitates whether to reckon it among the historical or prophetical books. Referring, however, to this contest among the three youths, he inclines rather to place it with the prophetical books, as he thinks that the third youth may perhaps be understood to have prophesied of Christ, when he said that truth was victorious over all things (compare ver. 41.); "for when we 'refer to the Gospel we find that Christ is the Truth' (St. John xiv. 6.) (Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, xviii. 36.). Esdras is called "the prophet" (2 Esdras i. 1.).

39, 40. "With her . . . she." It is not intended to personify Truth under the figure of a woman, but the translation is a literal following of the Greek, in which language the word for truth is feminine. In ver. 38 we have "it," and in ver. 36 "with it," where the rendering might have been, according to the method of translation followed in vv. 39, 40, "with her."

39. "No accepting of persons or taking rewards." Compare Deut. x. 17. 2 Chr. xix. 7. Job xxxiv. 19.

40. "Neither in her judgment is any unrighteousness." Compare 2 Chr. xix. 7. Ps. xcii. 15. Dan. ix. 14. Job viii. 3; xxxiv. 10, 12.

"She is the strength, kingdom, power, and majesty, of all ages." Compare 1 Chr. xxix. 11, and the doxology at the end of the Lord's prayer, found in many copies of St. Matt. vi. 13.

"Blessed be the God of truth." These words are cited by Origen (see on ver. 59.).

"Of truth" The genitive here expresses the attribute, the characteristic, the quality; this genitive often supplies the place of an adjective, as when we say, God of mercy, God of love; "the Lord is a God of knowledge" (1 Sam. ii. 3.). In Exod. xviii. 21 we have, "men of truth." Thus, the expression "God of truth" denotes, God Whose essential attribute is perfect and unfailing truth (compare Ps. xxxi. 5, "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of truth."). So Jer. x. 10 and Deut. xxxii. 4, "All His ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He."

41 And with that he held his peace. And all the people then shouted, and said, Great is Truth, and mighty above all things.

42 Then said the king unto him, Ask what thou wilt more than is appointed in the writing, and we will give it thee, because thou art found wisest; and thou shalt sit next me, and shalt be called my cousin.

43 Then said he unto the king, Remember thy vow, which thou hast vowed to build Jerusalem, in the day when thou camest to thy kingdom,

44 and to send away all the vessels that were taken away out of Jerusalem, which Cyrus set apart, when he vowed to destroy Babylon, and to send them again thither.

45 Thou also hast vowed to build up the temple, which the Edomites burned when Judea was made desolate by the Chaldees.

^a Ps. 137. 7.
^b Ezek. 25. 12.

42—63. The Victory of Zerubbabel, and his Reward.

42. "Shalt be called my cousin." See on iii. 7.

43. "Remember thy vow." Josephus says that when Darius was a private man he made a vow that if he became king he would rebuild Jerusalem, and build therein the Temple of God, and restore the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged and carried to Babylon (*Antiq.* XI. iii. 1. and 7.).

"To build Jerusalem." Compare vv. 47, 48, 55, 63.

44. "To send away all the vessels . . . which Cyrus set apart." The compiler, who arranged this legendary story in connection with portions of the history of the Jews taken from the Book of Ezra, seems to expect his readers to forget that he had already given a list of the vessels, more than five thousand in number, which had been some years ago sent back by Cyrus (ii. 11—15. See below, on ver. 57.).

"When he vowed to destroy Babylon." This vow of Cyrus has no other origin than the same legendary source from which comes the vow of Darius.

45. "The temple, which the Edomites burned when Judea was made desolate by the Chaldees." The house of the Lord was burned by the Babylonians (2 Kings xxv. 9. 2 Chr. xxxvi. 19.), but the Edomites may have rejoiced at the destruction, or may even have had a hand in it, as instigators or assistants. The Psalmist complains how in the "day of Jerusalem" the children of Edom cried, "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7. See also Obad. 10—15. Ezek. xxxv. 5.). It might have been expected that the Edomites as kinsmen would have taken part with Israel, so that it was felt as an especial aggravation of their hostility that they sided with the enemy and invader. There had been, however, from the beginning ill feeling (Num. xx. 18—21.), between the children of Esau and the children of Jacob, and the Edomites had a long train of in-

I. (III.) ESDRAS, IV.

46 And now, O lord the king, this is that which I require, and which I desire of thee, and this is the princely liberality proceeding from thyself: I desire therefore that thou make good the vow, the performance whereof with thine own mouth thou hast vowed to the King of heaven.

47 Then Darius the king stood up, and kissed him, and wrote letters for him unto all the treasurers and lieutenants and captains and governors, that they should safely convey on their way both him, and all those that go up with him to build Jerusalem.

48 He wrote letters also unto the lieutenants that were in Celosyria and Phenice, and unto them in Libanus, that they should bring cedar wood from Libanus unto Jerusalem, and that they should build the city with him.

49 Moreover he wrote for all the Jews that went out of his realm up into Jewry, concerning their freedom, that no officer, no ruler, no lieutenant, nor ² treasurer, should forcibly enter into their doors; ² Or, *steward*,

50 and that all the country which they hold should be free without tribute; and that the Edomites should give over the villages of the Jews which then they held:

vasions and slaughters to avenge; on one occasion, in the reign of David, nearly the whole of the male population was destroyed (1 Kin. xi. 15, 16. Compare also 2 Chr. xxv. 11, 12, &c. See below, ver. 50; viii. 69.).

46. "The king of heaven." See ver. 58.

47—56. "Darius the king wrote letters." The compiler of 1 Esdras does not trouble himself with the reflection that he contradicts these fictitious and imaginary letters of "Darius the king," when, further on, copying Ezra, he gives the letter of the historical Darius. See vi. 1, 23—34, where it is related that in this same "second year" of Darius, in which the wise sentences were spoken (v. 6.), in consequence of certain representations made by the Persian authorities in Syria and Phenice, search was made at Ecbatana for the decree of Cyrus, which gave to the Jews, as was asserted, permission to rebuild their Temple. It was not until this decree had been found, that Darius, accepting its policy, confirmed it by a decree of his own.

50. "Should be free without tribute." Compare 1 Macc. x. 29, 30; xi. 28, 35.

"That the Edomites should give over the villages of the Jews which they held." For the hostility of the Edomites, see ver. 45. The insertion of such a clause into this imaginary letter is

51 yea, that there should be yearly given twenty talents to the building of the temple, until the time that it were built;

52 and other ten talents yearly, to maintain the burnt offerings upon the altar every day, as they had a commandment to offer seventeen:

53 and that all they that went from Babylon to build the city should have free liberty, as well they as their posterity, and all the priests that went away.

54 He wrote also concerning the charges, and the priests' vestments wherein they minister;

55 and likewise for the charges of the Levites, to be given them until the day that the house were finished, and Jerusalem builded up.

56 And he commanded to give to all that kept the city ² pensions and wages.

57 He sent away also all the vessels from Babylon, that Cyrus had set apart; and all that Cyrus had given in commandment, the same charged he also to be done, and sent unto Jerusalem.

58 Now when this young man was gone forth, he

very characteristic of Jewish feelings. We have no historical information that the Edomites had taken possession of any part of Judæa, though it is not improbable that they may have done so. In Neh. xi. 25—35 we have, at a somewhat later period, a list of the towns in Benjamin and Judah reoccupied by the Jews as far South as Hebron (Kirjath-Arba), apparently without any opposition. Hebron afterwards fell into the possession of the Edomites, but was taken from them by Judas Maccabæus (1 Macc. v. 3, 65. Josephus, *Antiq.* XII. viii. 6.). It would seem, however, that shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, Hebron and the neighbourhood had come to be considered part of the territory of Idumæa (Josephus, *Wars*, IV. ix. 7, 9.).

Josephus prefers to enlarge the terms of the king's letter, and to make Darius enjoin that not only the Idumæans, but the Samaritans also, and the inhabitants of Coele-Syria, should restore those villages which they had taken from the Jews (*Antiq.* XI. iii. 8.).

52. "To offer seventeen." According to the "commandment" the daily burnt offerings were two: one lamb in the morning, and another in the evening (Exod. xxix. 38. Num. xxviii. 3—8.).

57. See also ver. 44. "He sent away also all the vessels from Babylon that Cyrus had set apart." So Josephus, XI. iii. 8. The vessels had been already sent back in the time of Cyrus, as both this author (ii. 10, 15.) and Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. i. 3.), have already stated, without caring to notice the contradiction.

58. "He lifted up his face to heaven toward Jerusalem." Compare Dan. vi. 10, "His windows being open in his chamber toward

I. (III.) ESDRAS, IV.

lifted up his face to heaven toward Jerusalem, and praised the King of heaven,

59 and said, From thee cometh victory, from thee cometh wisdom, and thine is the glory, and I am thy servant.

60 Blessed art thou, who hast given me wisdom: for to thee I give thanks, O Lord of our fathers.

61 And so he took the letters, and went out, and came unto Babylon, and told it all his brethren.

62 And they praised the God of their fathers, because he had given them freedom and liberty

63 to go up, and to build Jerusalem, and the temple which is called by his name: and they feasted with instruments of musick and gladness seven days.

"Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed." 1 Kin. viii, 48, "If they shall . . . in the land whither they were "carried captive. . . pray unto Thee toward their land, which Thou "gavest unto their fathers, the city which Thou hast chosen," &c. See also Jonah ii. 4. Ps. cxxxviii. 2. The outward act was significant of the inward yearning of the soul. The longing for the earthly city of God, of the faithful Israelite, who, far away in the land of the stranger, turned his face and his thoughts towards Jerusalem, may not inaptly serve as a parable of the longing felt for the Heavenly Sion by those, who, confessing themselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth, turn their hearts, with faith in God's promises, towards the better country, the true inheritance of peace.

"The King of heaven;" ver. 46. Compare Dan. iv. 37. Tob. xiii. 7. 11.

59, 60. This is a good and pious thanksgiving, which may be fittingly used by any one in the hour of success. Origen cites ver. 59 at the end of his *Ninth Homily on Joshua* (about 250, A.D.): "With Christ "for their leader, His soldiers will always conquer. So that we too "may say, as it is written in Esiras, 'From Thee, O Lord, cometh "victory, and I am Thy servant.' 'Blessed be the God of truth' " (ver. 40.). Upon Whom let us also always call, that He may grant us "victory in Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom be glory and dominion for "ever and ever."

59. "From thee cometh victory;" 1 Macc. iii. 18, 19. Prov. xxi. 31. 2 Macc. xiii. 15, "Having given the watchword to them that were "about him, Victory is of God."

"From thee cometh wisdom;" Ecclus. i. 1, "All wisdom cometh "from the Lord, and is with him for ever." Compare Prov. ii. 6. 1 Kin. iii. 9. St. James i. 5.

"Thine is the glory." Compare 1 Chr. xxix. 11—13. St. Matt. vi. 13. Rev. iv. 11.

60. "Thou who hast given me wisdom." Compare also Wisd. vii. 15—17; ix. 4; 10. 17.

63. "They feasted with instruments of music." For music at feasts, compare Is. v. 12. Amos vi. 5. St. Luke xv. 25.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 536.

CHAPTER V.

4 *The names and number of the Jews that returned home.* 50 *The altar is set up in his place.* 57 *The foundation of the temple is laid.* 73 *The work is hindered for a time.*

AFTER this were the principal men of the families chosen according to their tribes, to go up with their wives and sons and daughters, with their menservants and maidservants, and their cattle.

2 And Darius sent with them a thousand horsemen, till they had brought them back to Jerusalem safely, and with musical [instruments] tabrets and flutes.

3 And all their brethren played, and he made them go up together with them.

4 And these are the names of the men which went up, according to their families among their tribes, after their several heads.

CHAPTER V.

1—6. The Festive Return of the Jews.

1—3. This legendary story of the joyous procession to Jerusalem, with instruments of music and a guard of horsemen, is also repeated by Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. iii. 9.), who makes the number of those who returned to be nearly five millions (see on ver. 41.).

It would seem as if this story of the festive return of the exiles was invented in order to make out a fulfilment of *Is.* xxxv. 10; li. 11.

An early Christian writer of the second century appears to have found this story in his copy of *Esdra*s, and to have accepted it as historical, as he speaks of the children of God returning from Babylon with tabrets and flutes and psalteries (*Tertullian, De Cor.* ix.).

1. "Wives, sons, and daughters." We have no mention made of these in the historical account.

2. "With musical instruments, tabrets and flutes." Compare *Gen.* xxxi. 27, "Wherefore didst thou . . . not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?"

3. "And all their brethren played, and he made them go up together with them." It is not quite easy to say what the writer meant by this; perhaps we may take the words thus: "All their brethren played,"—all their brethren who did not leave their homes to go up to Jerusalem, joined in the festive music at bidding farewell to the band of those who were returning; "and he made them" (those who returned) "go up together with them" (the horsemen who were to escort them to Jerusalem).

4. "Their several heads." See on i. 5.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, V.

5 The priests, the sons of Phinees the son of Aaron: Jesus the son of Josedec, the son of Saraias, and ²Joachim the son of Zorobabel, the son of Salathiel, of the house of David, out of the kindred of Phares, of the tribe of Judah;

6 ^a who spake wise sentences before Darius the king of Persia in the second year of his reign, in the month Nisan, which is the first month.

7 And these are they of Jewry that came up from the captivity, where they dwelt as strangers, whom Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon.

8 And they returned unto Jerusalem, and to the other parts of Jewry, every man to his own city,

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²Joachim and Zorobabel: This place is corrupt: for Joachim was the son of Josedech, Neh. 12. 10, and not Zorobabel, who was of the tribe of Judah.

^a Zorobabel.

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5. "Jesus." See Note on ver. 8.

"The son of Saraias." The High Priest Seraiah was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar, when Jerusalem was taken (2 Kin. xxv. 18, 21.). Saraias was also an ancestor of Ezra (Ezra vii. 1. 1 Chr. vi. 14.).

"Joachim the son of Zerubbabel." Zerubbabel had no son named Joachim (1 Chr. iii. 19; 20.), and there is a contradiction between this place and iv. 13. As there is no authority for altering the reading, it is possible that in an earlier form of the legend the name of the hero was Joachim, and that Zerubbabel, as the better known name of a distinguished person, became substituted for it (iv. 13.). Jeshua, the high priest at this time, had a son named Joachim (Neh. xii. 10, 26.), and the *Margin* would seem to suggest that this is the person meant; when, however, this marginal note speaks of Joachim as being "the son of Josedech," it is not sufficiently accurate for its purpose.

6. "In the second year of the reign of Darius." See vi. 1, and v. 73.

7-46. The List of the Names and Numbers of those who returned with Zerubbabel.

(Ezra ii.).

The compiler now returns to the narrative in Ezra, and transfers to the time of Darius the record of the names and numbers of those who had returned to Jerusalem in the reign of Cyrus.

7. "And these are they of Jewry." This shows in what sense the compiler of I Esdras understood the words in Ezra ii. 1, "the children of the province," i.e. Judæa.

8. This statement of the names of the chief leaders of the expedition contains, as does the list given in Neh. vii., twelve names, the number of the tribes of Israel. In Ezra ii. 2, there are only eleven names; one name, Nahamani, represented here by Eneuius, having fallen out. It is often difficult to reproduce Hebrew names in Greek, and unfamiliar names suffer much corruption in transcription; even

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^b *Savaiah.*
^c Or, *Mispar.*
^d Or,
Reelaiah.

^e *Parosh,*
Ezra 2. 3.
Neh. 7. 8.
where for
brevity look
for the true
numbers of the
particulars following:
^f *Shephatiah.* ^g Or, *three hundred seventy two.*

who came with Zorobabel, with Jesus, Nehemias, and ^b Zacharias, and Reesaia, Enenius, Mardocheus, Beelsarus, ^c Aspharasus, ^d Reelius, Roimus, and Ba-
ana, their guides.

9 The number of them of the nation, and their governors, sons of ^e Phoros, two thousand an hundred seventy and two; the sons of ^f Saphiat, ^g four hundred seventy and two:

in Nehemiah, the names do not accurately correspond with those in Ezra. Thus, Mizpar is Mispereth in Nehemiah, and here appears as Asparathus.

"Jesus;" vv. 5, 48, 56, 70; vi. 2. Ecclus. xlix. 12. Jesus is the Greek way of writing the name which in the translation of the Old Testament we write as Joshua. Thus, the Book of Joshua is the Book of Jesus (compare Acts vii. 45. Heb. iv. 8. Ecclus. xlv. 1.). Everywhere in the New Testament, as in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the name is written Jesus (St. Matt. i. 1, &c.).

"Their guides" is added, by way of explanation, by the compiler.

9—23. On comparing this list with the corresponding lists in Ezra ii. and Neh. vii., many variations, as might be expected, are found, both in the names and in the numbers. The total given is the same in all the three lists, viz. 42,360; but in 1 Esdras (ver. 41.), it is added, that this was the whole number of "them of twelve years "old and upward." The sum, however, of the separate numbers does not make up this total, and varies in all the three lists. In Ezra, the numbers, when added together, make up only 29,818; in Neh., 31,089. In 1 Esdras the numbers are higher, but in consequence of the variation of the manuscripts, it is difficult to ascertain what the exact total may have been; in round numbers, however, it may be given as about 34,000. These variations in the manuscripts, and the chief printed editions, are sometimes considerable (see on vv. 13, 14, 25.).

In some instances, the names and numbers are the same in all the three lists; for instance, "Phoros, 2,172" (ver. 9.); "Phaath Moab, 2,812" (ver. 11.); "Elam, 1,254" (ver. 12.). Sometimes the variations are slight; as, for instance, "Adonikam," "Bagoi" (ver 14.). Sometimes the variations and corruptions in this list of 1 Esdras are very great, and the names are at times so altered, that we can hardly, if at all, recognize them as representatives of the names for which they may be presumed to stand.

In illustration of the way in which the lists vary, it may be noted that in ver. 15 there is an insertion of four names, "the sons of Ceilan "and Azetas," of "Azuran," and of "Ananias," whose united numbers come to 600, all omitted in Ezra and Nehemiah. In ver. 17, we have the "sons of Meterus, 3,005," instead of the "children of Gibbar" (Ezra), or "Gibeon" (Neh.), 95. In vv. 19, 20, there is another addition of names not found in Ezra or Nehemiah, "they of Pira, 700; they of Chadias and Annidoi, 422:" it should, however, be noticed, that the words "they of "Pira, 700," are inserted without authority by the English Version, and are not found in the Greek. In ver. 21, after "the sons of Nephis,"

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10 the sons of Ares, seven hundred fifty and six :

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11 the sons of Phaath Moab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve :

12 the sons of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four : the sons of ^h Zathui, nine hundred ^h Zattu.
forty and five : the sons of ⁱ Corbe, seven hundred and ⁱ Zacchai.
five : the sons of Bani, six hundred forty and eight :

13 the sons of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three : the sons of ^k Sadas, three thousand two hundred ^k Asgar.
twenty and two :

14 the sons of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and seven : the sons of ^l Bagoi, two thousand sixty and ^l Bigui.
six : the sons of Adin, four hundred fifty and four :

15 the sons of ^m Aterezias, ninety and two : the ^m Ater-
sons of Ceilan and Azetas, threescore and seven : the ^{he.ekiah.}
sons of Azuran, four hundred thirty and two :

16 the sons of Ananias, an hundred and one : the sons of Arom, thirty two : and the sons of ⁿ Bassa, ⁿ Bezai.
three hundred twenty and three : the sons of Aze-
phurith, an hundred and two :

17 the sons of Meterus, three thousand and five : the sons of ^o Bethlomon, an hundred twenty and ^o Bothlehem.
three :

18 they of Netophah, fifty and five : they of Anathoth, an hundred fifty and eight : they of ^p Bethsamos, forty and two : ^p Azmaveth.

("Nebo and Magbish," Ezra ; "the other Nebo," Neh., who omits Magbish), there is an omission of two names, "the children of the other Elam, "1,254; the children of Harim, 320." In ver. 22, Lod and Hadid appear as "Calamolalus." The *Margin* refers to Ezra and Nehemiah, for "the true numbers of the particulars following;" but, as Ezra and Nehemiah themselves vary, this discovery of the "true numbers" is not so easily made.

13, 14. As a further example of the difficulty of ascertaining the numbers which are intended to be stated here, it may be observed that in ver. 13, for instance, instead of 3,222, as stated in the Alexandrian copy of the Greek as the number of "the sons of Sadas," the Vatican copy gives 1,322. The English Version has here adopted the numbers which seem to have most authority, but the name "Sadas" has been substituted, apparently without any sufficient reason, for Argai (Vat.), or Astaa, or rather Astad, which is supported by the majority of the manuscripts; this name appears as Azgad in Ezra and Nehemiah. Again, in ver. 14, for "the sons of Bagoi, two thousand sixty and "six," the Vatican copy of the Greek reads, 2,606: in Ezra, we have "the sons of Bigvai, 2,056;" in Nehemiah, 2,067.

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^a Kiriath-
jardin.

^r Rama.

^s Gaba.

^t Michmas.

^u Bethel.

^x Maghbis.

^y Lodhadid.

^z Senaah.

^a Jedaiiah.

^b Immar.

^c Pashur.

^d Harim.

^e Or, two hun-
dred and
seventeen,
according to
some copies.

^f Thus it is
read, Ezra 2.
40, the sons of
Jeshua, and
Cadmiel, of
the sons of
Hodaviah.

19 they of ^aKiriathiarus, twenty and five: they of Caphira and Beroth, seven hundred forty and three: they of Pira, seven hundred:

20 they of Chadias and Ammidoi, four hundred twenty and two: they of ^rCirama and ^sGabdes, six hundred twenty and one:

21 they of ^tMacalon, an hundred twenty and two: they of ^uBetolius, fifty and two: the sons of ^xNephis, an hundred fifty and six:

22 the sons of ^yCalamolalus and Onus, seven hundred twenty and five: the sons of Jerechus, two hundred forty and five:

23 the sons of ^zAnnaas, three thousand three hundred and thirty.

24 The priests: the sons of ^aJeddu, the son of Jesus, among the sons of Sanasib, nine hundred seventy and two: the sons of ^bMeruth, a thousand fifty and two:

25 the sons of ^cPhassaron, a thousand forty and seven: the sons of ^dCarme, ^ea thousand and seventeen.

26 The Levites: the sons of ^fJessue, and Cadmiel, and Banuas, and Sudias, seventy and four.

27 The holy singers: the sons of Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight.

19. "They of Pira, seven hundred." These words are inserted without authority.

25. "The sons of Phassaron" ("Pashur," Ezra and Nehemiah), "a thousand forty and seven." The Greek (Alex., and the majority of the manuscripts) gives 1,247, as in Ezra and Nehemiah; so that, if we adopt this, the number of the priests would be 4,288, only one less than the number given in Ezra and Nehemiah. But it may be mentioned, in illustration of the difficulty of obtaining anything like accuracy in transcriptions of this kind, that, according to another of the most important and ancient copies of the Greek (LXX., Vat.), the whole number of the priests is only 2,388; while, according to the Latin, they amount to no more than 1,208.

26. The number of the Levites (74) is the same as in Ezra and Nehemiah.

27. "The holy singers" (i. 15; viii. 5, 22; ix. 24.). The Temple singers (Levites), as distinct from the singers who assisted at funerals, or marriages, or other festivities: these singers are reckoned among the servants (ver. 42. Ezra ii. 65, *Note*). The number of the sacred singers (128) agrees with Ezra, but in Nehemiah the number given is 148.

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28 The porters: the sons of ^gSalum, the sons of ^hJatal, the sons of Talmon, the sons of ⁱDacobi, the sons of ^kTeta, the sons of ^lSami, in all an hundred thirty and nine.

29 The servants of the temple: the sons of ^mEsau, the sons of ⁿAsipha, the sons of Tabaoth, the sons of ^oCeras, the sons of ^pSud, the sons of ^qPhaleas, the sons of Labana, the sons of ^rGraba,

30 the sons of ^sAcua, the sons of Uta, the sons of ^tCetab, the sons of Agaba, the sons of ^uSubai, the sons of Anan, the sons of ^xCathua, the sons of ^yGeddur,

31 the sons of ^zAirus, the sons of ^aDaisan, the sons of ^bNoeba, the sons of Chaseba, the sons of ^cGazera, the sons of ^dAzia, the sons of ^ePhinees, the sons of Azara, the sons of ^fBastai, the sons of ^gAsana, the sons of ^hMeani, the sons of ⁱNaphisi, the sons of ^kAcub, the sons of ^lAcipha, the sons of ^mAssur, the sons of Pharacim, the sons of ⁿBa-saloth,

32 the sons of ^oMeeda, the sons of Coutha, the sons of ^pCharea, the sons of ^qChareus, the sons of ^rAserer, the sons of ^sThomoi, the sons of ^tNasith, the sons of Atipha.

33 The sons of the servants of Solomon: the sons of ^uAzaphion, the sons of ^xPharira, the sons of ^yJeeli, the sons of ^zLozon, the sons of ^aIsdael, the sons of ^bSapheth,

34 the sons of ^cHagia, the sons of ^dPhacareth, the sons of Sabi, the sons of Sarothie, the sons of Masias, the sons of Gar, the sons of Addus, the sons

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^g Shallum.

^h Ater.

ⁱ Akkub.

^k Hatita.

^l Shobai.

^m Zich.

ⁿ Hasapha.

^o Keros.

^p Siaba.

^q Padon.

^r Agaba.

^s Akkub.

^t Hagab.

^u Shumai.

^x Giddel.

^y Gahur.

^z Bealab.

^a Bezin.

^b Neceadab.

^c Gazan.

^d Huzai.

^e Pasceah.

^f Besai.

^g Asnah.

^h Merina.

ⁱ Nephusai.

^k Balbul.

^l Hacupa.

^m Harhur.

ⁿ Bazith.

^o Meula.

^p Harsha.

^q Barcos.

^r Sisera.

^s Thamai.

^t Neziah.

^u Sephereth.

^x Peruda.

^y Jaalub.

^z Darcon.

^a Giddel.

^b Shephathiah.

^c Hatti.

^d Phocareth.

^e Hazzabain.

Ezra 2. 57.

28. "The porters . . . an hundred thirty and nine." So Ezra; Nehemiah, 138. "The porters" (i. 16; vii. 9; viii. 5, 22.).

29, 35. "The servants of the temple." Compare viii. 5, 22, 49. This represents very well the general sense of Nethinim, under which name those "given," or "appointed," for the service of the Temple, are mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah.

33, 34. "The sons of the servants of Solomon." See on Ezra ii. 55. As a further illustration of the changes and errors which occur in this list, it may be noted, that the first name in the Hebrew (Ezra ii. 55. Neh. vii. 57.), Sotai, is omitted here; while all the names in ver. 34 after "Sabi" ("Ami," Ezra; "Amon," Neh.), nine in number (if we keep Allom as a proper name), are not found in Ezra.

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of Suba, the sons of Apherra, the sons of Barodis, the sons of Sabat, the sons of Allom:

35 All the ministers of the temple, and the sons of the servants of Solomon, were three hundred seventy and two.

36 These came up from Thermeleth and Thelersas, Charaathalar leading them, and Aalar;

37 neither could they shew their families, nor their stock, how they were of Israel: the sons of ^eLadan, the son of ^fBan, the sons of ^gNecodan, six hundred fifty and two.

^e Delajah.
^f Tobiah.
^g Necodah.

38 And of the priests that usurped the office of the priesthood, and were not found: the sons of ^hObdia, the sons of ⁱAccoz, the sons of ^kAddus, who married Augia one of the daughters of Berzelus, and was named after his name.

^h Hobajah.
ⁱ Cos.
^k Barzelai.

39 And when the description of the kindred of these men was sought in the register, and was not found, they were removed from executing the office of the priesthood:

² Nehemias,
who also is
Atharias:
two of one:
Ezra 2. 63.
Neh. 8. 9.
& 10. 1.

40 for unto them said ²Nehemias and Atharias, that they should not be partakers of the holy things, till there arose up an high priest clothed with ³doctrine and truth.

³ Hch.
Urim and
Thummim.

or Nehemiah, though inserted here. Some of the names which appear intended to correspond with the names in the Hebrew lists, are so altered as to have lost all resemblance to the names they may be supposed to represent; thus, "Darkon" (in Ezra and Nehemiah), appears here (in ver. 33.) as "Lozon."

36. "Charaathalar leading them, and Aalar." These words are substituted here for the names of some places, given in Ezra and Nehemiah, "Cherub, Addan (or Addon), and Immer."

37. The number of those persons who could not prove their Jewish descent is the same here as in Ezra, 652; but in Nehemiah (vii. 62.) they are 642.

38. "The sons of Addus, who married Augia one of the daughters of Berzelus." No trace of the name of this woman, Augia, is found in the Hebrew. Addus and Berzelus are both substitutes for the one name, Barzillai. Berzelus seems to be a later attempt at correction, in order to make the name less unlike the Hebrew, as in the most ancient and valuable of the manuscripts of the Greek the name is written Zorzellæus (Alex.), or Phæzeldæus (Vat.).

40. "Unto them said Nehemias and Atharias." In the present text there is a double mistake; Nehemias is wrongly brought in, and

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41 So of Israel, from them of twelve years old and upward, they were all in number forty thousand, beside menservants and womenservants two thousand three hundred and sixty.

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Atharias (compare ix. 49, "Attharates"), the name of an office, is taken as the name of a person. As "said" is in the singular, the correction of the *Margin* may be admitted, "Nehemias, even, or, who also is, "Atharias." Atharias (ix. 49, "Attharates"), represents the title, "the Tirshatha" (Ezra ii. 63. Neh. vii. 65), given to Zerubbabel, and at a later period to Nehemiah (Neh. viii. 9; x. 1.). We cannot now tell whether Nehemias was written here by the mistake of the original compiler, or whether it may have crept in from the *Margin*, where it may have been placed by some one who, remembering that Nehemiah was spoken of as the Tirshatha, supposed that he was meant here, forgetting that at this early period Zerubbabel was the Tirshatha.

"Till there stood up a high priest clothed with doctrine and truth." The compiler translates the less known words, Urim and Thummim (Exod. xxviii. 30. Ezra ii. 63. Neh. vii. 65), and fairly represents their meaning, "Light" and "Perfection." The Greek word here rendered "doctrine," means explaining, manifesting, revealing; we may compare the Greek translation (LXX.) of the parallel place in Nehemiah, "Till there stood up the priest that should show light."

41. "Besides menservants and womenservants, two thousand three hundred and sixty." The clauses in this verse are in our version so awkwardly misplaced, that a seeming difficulty is created, and an apparent contradiction between this verse and ver. 42, respecting the number of the servants. One may suppose that the mistake arose merely from an error of the press, which had escaped correction. Read the verse thus, "So all Israel, from them of twelve years old and upward, besides menservants and womenservants, were in number forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty."

The number of those who returned is the same here as in Ezra and Nehemiah, though here only it is said that these 42,360 were "of twelve years old and upward" ("Sons of the Law." Compare St. Luke ii. 42.). The compiler of 1 Esdras follows Ezra and Nehemiah in making no mention here of any younger children, or of any wives who accompanied the returning exiles; but at the end of the legendary story of Zerubbabel and Darius, we read of those chosen to go up, with their wives, and sons, and daughters (v. 1.). Josephus says that the women and children were 40,742 (*Antiq.* XI. iii. 10.).

It has been noted on Ezra ii. 66—69, how feeble was the remnant of a once populous nation, that came back from the land of their captivity; a mere seed from which might spring the future people, the root which might in time grow up into a tree (viii. 78, 87, 88.). To the later Jews this seemed too humiliating, and thus Josephus, according to the present copies, makes the multitude of those who returned to have been nearly five millions (4,628,000, *Antiq.* XI. iii. 10.). If this reckless assertion is to be attributed to Josephus himself, and not to the mistakes of his transcribers, it is absurdly out of proportion to the statements which he himself makes immediately afterwards respecting the number of the Levites (74, as in ver. 26.), the singers, and porters.

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1 See Neh. 7.
67.

m Ezra 2. 67.

2 asses.

42 Their ¹ menservants and handmaids were seven thousand three hundred forty and seven : the singing men and singing women, two hundred forty and five :

43 ^m four hundred thirty and five camels, seven thousand thirty and six horses, two hundred forty and five mules, five thousand five hundred twenty and five ² beasts used to the yoke.

44 And certain of the chief of their families, when they came to the temple of God that is in Jerusalem, vowed to set up the house again in his own place according to their ability,

45 and to give into the holy treasury of the works

the beasts of burden, the women and children. In order to soothe still further the national vanity, Josephus explains further that there were only two tribes in Asia and Europe, subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes remained beyond Euphrates in immense multitudes, not to be estimated by numbers (*Antiq.* XI. v. 2.). This separate existence of the ten tribes was a mere fancy of the Jews, (see 4 Esdr. xiii. 40—43, *Note.*). The lists given of those who returned with Zerubbabel, and afterwards with Ezra, make no tribal distinctions among the laity ; and though those who came back were necessarily in great part made up of the three tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, they returned as the representatives of the whole people (see *Notes* on Ezra ii. 70. Neh. xi. 3.).

42. The servants, according to Ezra, Nehemiah, and Josephus, were ten less, viz. 7,357. The number of the singing men and singing women are the same in Nehemiah and Josephus as in this place, viz. 245 ; but in Ezra they are set down as 200. These singers, reckoned among the slaves, are not to be confused with the "holy singers" (ver. 27.), the Levites, who took part in the service of the Temple (see on Ezra ii. 65.).

43. The camels and mules are the same in number as in Ezra and Nehemiah ; but the horses here are many more, 7,036, instead of 736, as in Ezra and Nehemiah. The asses, or beasts of burden, are fewer, 5,525, instead of 6,720, as stated in Ezra and Nehemiah. Josephus (XI. iii. 10.) agrees with the statements of 1 Esdras with respect to the numbers of the camels and beasts of burden, but omits altogether the horses and mules.

44. "When they came to the temple." That is, the place where the Temple formerly stood.

"His own place." In more modern English we should say, "its" (see ver. 50 ; and 4 Esdr. iv. 19, 21.).

45. 1 Esdras agrees with Ezra in stating only the gifts of the chiefs of the families, omitting the gifts of the Tirshatha and the people which are enumerated by Nehemiah. 1 Esdras also agrees with Ezra as to the silver and the garments, but with respect to the gold, the difference is considerable. In Ezra, the gold is said to amount to 61,000 "drams," or darics (the daric is equal to nearly twenty-two shillings) ; in 1 Esdras, the gold is stated to amount to one thousand "pounds," or minæ. Josephus agrees with 1 Esdras as to the silver and gold, but omits the garments. The mina of gold, according to Josephus (*Antiq.* XIV. vii. 1.), was equal to two Roman pounds and a

a thousand pounds of gold, five thousand of silver, and an hundred priestly vestments.

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46 And so dwelt the priests and the Levites and the people in Jerusalem, and in the country, the singers also and the porters; and all Israel in their villages.

47 But when the seventh month was at hand, and when the children of Israel were every man in his own place, they came all together with one consent into the open place of the first ²gate which is toward the east.

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² Or, before
the east gate.

48 Then stood up Jesus the son of Josedec, and his brethren the priests, and Zorobabel the son of Salathiel, and his brethren, and made ready the altar of the God of Israel,

49 to offer burnt sacrifices upon it, according as it is expressly commanded in the book of Moses the man of God.

50 And there were gathered unto them out of the other nations of the land, and they erected the altar upon his own place, because all the nations of the land were at enmity with them, and oppressed them; and they offered sacrifices according to the time, and burnt offerings to the Lord both morning and evening.

half, or about twenty-six ounces Troy; so that, if we accept this statement, the gold would be more than a hundred thousand pounds.

47—65. The Setting up of the Altar of God, and the commencement of the Building of the Temple.

(Ezra iii.).

47. "Unto the open place of the first gate, which is toward the east." In Ezra, it is only "to Jerusalem." "Open place;" see on ix. 38, 41. "The first gate." At this period there were no gates, and the city was encumbered with ruins. The writer either uses "gate" to denote (as in Neh. ii. 14, 15.) the place where the gate once stood, or, perhaps, may describe the locality according to the state of things in his own time. "The first gate" (Zech. xiv. 10.) may possibly be the same as the "water gate" (Neh. viii. 1, 3.), which was on the east (Neh. xii. 37.); while the "street," or open space before the water gate, was a convenient spot for the religious gathering.

49. "Moses the man of God;" Deut. xxxiii. 1. Ps. xc., title.

50. "There were gathered unto them out of the other nations of the land." The meaning of these words is not very clear: they

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51 Also they held the feast of tabernacles, as it is commanded in the law, and *offered* sacrifices daily, as was meet :

² Or, *daily sacrifice*.

52 and after that, the ² continual oblations, and the sacrifice of the sabbaths, and of the new moons, and of all holy feasts.

³ Gr. *hallowed*.

53 And all they that had ³ made any vow to God began to offer sacrifices to God from the first day of the seventh month, although the temple of the Lord was not yet built.

54 And they gave unto the masons and carpenters money, meat, and drink, with cheerfulness.

55 Unto them of Zidon also and Tyre they gave carrs, that they should bring cedar trees from Libanus, which should be brought by floats to the haven of Joppe, according as it was commanded them by Cyrus king of the Persians.

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56 And in the second year and second month after his coming to the temple of God at Jerusalem began Zorobabel the son of Salathiel, and Jesus the son of Josedec, and their brethren, and the priests, and the Levites, and all they that were come unto Jerusalem out of the captivity :

57 and they laid the foundation of the house of God

are not in Ezra. It would seem to mean that now, as at a later period, the children of Israel were joined by others, not Israelites, who became proselytes. Compare vii. 13. Ezra vi. 21. Neh. x. 28.

"The altar upon his own place." See ver. 44.

54, 55. The English translation here, without any apparent reason, follows the Latin translation instead of the Greek text, which runs thus, "And they gave money unto the masons and carpenters, and meat and drink, and carrs unto them of Zidon and Tyre, that they should bring down cedar trees from Libanus." The Greek text follows Ezra, with the exception of the word "carrs," which has become substituted for "oil" (compare also 2 Chr. ii. 10.). "With cheerfulness." The English follows the Latin, in inserting these words; they seem to be a guess on the part of one of the Latin scribes, who, as the word "car" is in sound not unlike the Greek word for joy, may have written in the margin this attempt at a supposed explanation, which afterwards crept into the text.

55. "By floats." Compare 2 Chr. ii. 16, "in flotes."

57. "They laid the foundation of the house of God." According to ii. 18, 30, these foundations had been laid long before (see on ii. 16—30.).

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in the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come to Jewry and Jerusalem.

58 ^a And they appointed the Levites from twenty years old over the works of the Lord. Then stood up Jesus, and his sons and brethren, and Cadmiel his brother, and the sons of Madiabun, with the sons of Joda the son of Eliadun, with their sons and brethren, all Levites, with one accord ²setters forward of the business, labouring to advance the works in the house of God. So the workmen built the temple of the Lord.

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^a See Ezra 3, 8, 9, &c.

² Or, overseers, or, encouragers of them that wrought in the house of the Lord.

59 And the priests stood arrayed in their vestments with musical instruments and trumpets; and the Levites the sons of Asaph had cymbals,

60 singing songs of thanksgiving, and praising the Lord, ³according as David the king of Israel had ordained.

³ Or, after the manner of David king of Israel.

61 And they sung *with* loud voices songs to the praise of the Lord, because his mercy and glory is for ever in all Israel.

62 And all the people sounded trumpets, and shouted with a loud voice, singing songs of thanksgiving unto the Lord for the rearing up of the house of the Lord.

63 ^oAlso of the priests and Levites, and of the chief of their families, the ancients who had seen the former house came to the building of this with weeping and great crying.

^o Ezra 3. 12, 13.

“In the first day of the second month,” &c. This is not in Ezra.

58. “The sons of Madiabun,” or, as in the Greek, Emadabun. This is not in Ezra iii. 9. “Eliadun” (in the Greek, Heliadud), seems to be a corruption of Henadad.

“So the workmen built the temple of the Lord.” So vv. 62, 63, “the rearing up of the house of the Lord,” “came to the building of this” house. These are inaccuracies of the compiler,—his own subsequent narrative implies that the Temple was not built (ver. 73: vii. 5.); and Ezra expressly states that this ceremony, with its mingled feelings of joy and sadness, was held when the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Josephus (XI. iv. 2.), copies the mistake, and speaks of the Temple “being finished.”

60. “According as David the king of Israel had ordained;” Ezra iii. 10. Compare i. 5.

62. “All the people sounded with trumpets.” Compare vv. 64, 65. All this trumpet blowing by the *people* is inserted by the fancy of the compiler.

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64 But many with trumpets and joy shouted with loud voice,

² Or,
discerned.

65 insomuch that the trumpets might not be ² heard for the weeping of the people: yet the multitude sounded marvellously, so that it was heard afar off.

^p Ezra 4. 1,
&c.

66 ^p Wherefore when the enemies of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin heard it, they came to know what that noise of trumpets should mean.

67 And they perceived that they that were of the captivity did build the temple unto the Lord God of Israel.

68 So they went to Zorobabel and Jesus, and to the chief of the families, and said unto them, We will build together with you.

^a Or, Esar-
haddon,
Ezra 4. 2.

69 For we likewise, as ye, do obey your Lord, and do sacrifice unto him from the days of ³ Azbazareth the king of the Assyrians, who brought us hither.

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70 Then Zorobabel and Jesus and the chief of the families of Israel said unto them, It is not for us and you to build together an house unto the Lord our God.

71 We ourselves alone will build unto the Lord of Israel, according as Cyrus the king of the Persians hath commanded us.

72 But the heathen of the land lying heavy upon

66—73. The Hindering the Building of the Temple.

Ezra iv. 1—5.

66, 67. "They came to know what that sound of trumpets should mean... And they perceived that they... did build the temple." We owe to the imagination of the compiler this rhetorical statement that the watchful enemies of the Jews first learned what they were doing by the loud sound of trumpets at this ceremonial. The statement is copied and amplified by Josephus (XI. iv. 3.): "And when the Samaritans... heard the sound of the trumpets they came running together, and desired to know what was the occasion of this tumult, and when they perceived," &c.

69. "Azbazareth," or Asbakaphas, as in the Vatican manuscript of the Greek (LXX.). In Ezra iv. 2, we have Esarhaddon, whose name only occurs in one other place, 2 Kings xix. 37 (Is. xxxvii. 38.), while no details are given of any colonization which he effected in Palestine. Josephus (XI. iv. 3.) replaces these names by the more familiar name of Shalmaneser, whose war with Hosea and capture of Samaria (2 Kin. xvii. 3; xviii. 9.) he had already related.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, VI.

the inhabitants of Judea, and holding them strait, hindered their building;

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73 and by their secret plots, and popular persuasions and commotions, they hindered the finishing of the building all the time that king Cyrus lived: so they were hindered from building for the space of two years, ² until the reign of Darius.

² Or, until
the second
year of
Darius,
Ezra 4. 5, 6,
7, 24.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *The prophets stir up the people to build the temple. 8 Darius is solicited to hinder it: 27 but he doth further it by all means, 32 and threateneth those that shall hinder it.*

NOW ^a in the second year of the reign of Darius Aggeus and Zacharias the son of ² Addo, the

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^a Ezra 4. 24.
& 5. 1, &c.
³ Or, Iddo.

73. "By their secret plots, and popular persuasions and commotions." The latter part of ver. 73 reproduces, though incorrectly, Ezra iv. 5, to which is prefixed this flourish of phrases inserted by some Greek. The verse is intended as a summary of the general result of the hostility of the enemies of the Jews, and of their success in hindering the building of the Temple. It serves to connect chaps. v. and vi., and thus supplies the place of that portion of the Book of Ezra (iv. 6—24.), which has been omitted here.

"They hindered the finishing of the building all the time that king Cyrus lived." With so little skill have the legendary and the historical accounts been tacked together, that it has been overlooked that this is in contradiction to the previous story, which relates (iv. 43—v. 6.) that it was not until the subsequent reign of Darius that the sacred vessels were restored and permission first given to rebuild the Temple.

In an earlier part of the book (ii. 16—30.), there has been inserted an account (taken from Ezra iv. 6—24.) of the hindrances to the building of the Temple during the reign of Artaxerxes (the false Smerdis, who succeeded Cambyses the son of Cyrus), and during the intervening period, "until the second year of the reign of Darius." This account (Ezra iv. 6—24.) has been cut away from the position which, if the order of events in Ezra had been followed, it would have occupied here between chaps v. and vi.; and has been placed immediately after the narrative of the arrival of Zerubbabel, and before any account had been given that the rebuilding of the Temple had been begun.

"For the space of two years." Some fifteen years, from B.C. 535 to 520. After the death of Cyrus, in B.C. 529, two reigns (those of Cambyses and the false Smerdis) intervened before the accession of Darius the son of Hystaspes in B.C. 521.

CHAPTER VI.

The Letter to Darius, and the King's Reply.

Ezra v.—vi. 12.

1. "Now in the second year of the reign of Darius" (v. 6.). The narrative goes on, following Ezra, as if the compiler of 1 Esdras had

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² Or, which
was called
on them.

prophets, prophesied unto the Jews in Jewry and Jerusalem in the name of the Lord God of Israel, ² which was upon them.

2 Then stood up Zorobabel the son of Salathiel, and Jesus the son of Josedec, and began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, the prophets of the Lord being with them, *and* helping them.

^b Ezra 5. 3.

³ Or, Tatnai.

⁴ Shethar-boznai.

3 ^bAt the same time came unto them ³ Sisinnes the governor of Syria and Phenice, with ⁴ Sathrabuzanes and his companions, and said unto them,

4 By whose appointment do ye build this house and this roof, and perform all the other things? and who are the workmen that perform these things?

5 Nevertheless the elders of the Jews obtained favour, because the Lord had visited the captivity;

never read the earlier portions of the book, in which it is related that Darius, in order to fulfil his vow and reward Zerubbabel, had sent back the Jews with all joy and festivity, accompanied by a guard of horsemen; and had written letters to all the treasurers and governors, that great favour should be showed to the Jews, and that large sums yearly were to be contributed out of the royal revenues for the building of the Temple, and the maintenance of its services (iv. 47—56.). Josephus here also follows 1 Esdras in its mistakes and contradictions (compare *Antiq.* XI. iv. 6, 7, with XI. iii. 8.).

"Zacharias the son of Addo." "Addo" is the form which the Greek translators give to Iddo in Ezra v. 1. Zech. i. 7. "Son:" descendant of Iddo (Neh. xii. 4, 16.); the name of the father of Zacharias was Berechiah (Zech. i. 1, 7.).

"The name of the Lord God of Israel, which was upon them." See *Note* on Ezra v. 1; and on 2 Esdr. i. 24.

2. "Jesus the son of Josedec;" v. 5, "Jesus." See on v. 8.

"The prophets of the Lord being with them, and helping them." Haggai (Hag. i. 12—14.) and Zechariah (Zech. iv. 6—10.).

3. "Sisinnes . . . Sathrabuzanes." Josephus also (*Antiq.* XI. iv. 4.) adopts these forms of representing the names Tatnai and Shethar-boznai.

"Syria and Phenice;" vv. 7, 27; ii. 25; viii. 19, 23. This appears to be only a variation of expression for "Celosyria and Phenice," for which see ii. 27. Sometimes there is a variety of reading, some manuscripts reading "Syria," others "Celosyria" (see viii. 67.). The two forms of expression not unfrequently follow or replace each other, as if one were merely the equivalent of the other (see, for instance, ii. 24, 25, 27; and vi. 27, 29; vii. 1.). Josephus also (*Antiq.* XI. ii. 1.) uses the two names in the same passage, apparently without any distinction.

5. "The captivity." That is, the body of the returned exiles. "Captivity" is used here, as elsewhere frequently, for band of captives.

1. (III.) ESDRAS, VI.

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6 and they were not hindered from building, until such time as signification was given unto Darius concerning them, and an answer received.

7 The copy of the letters which Sisinnes, governor of Syria and Phenice, and Sathrabuzanes, with their companions, rulers in Syria and Phenice, wrote and sent unto Darius; To king Darius, greeting:

8 Let all things be known unto our lord the king, that being come into the country of Judea, and entered into the city of Jerusalem, we found in the city of Jerusalem the ancients of the Jews that were of the captivity

9 building an house unto the Lord, great *and* new, of hewn and costly stones, and the timber already laid upon the walls.

10 And those works are done with great speed, and the work goeth on prosperously in their hands, and with all glory and diligence is it made.

11 Then asked we these elders, saying, By whose commandment build ye this house, and lay the foundations of these works?

12 Therefore to the intent that we might give knowledge unto thee by writing, we demanded of them who were the chief doers, and we required of them the names in writing of their principal men.

13 So they gave us this answer, We are the servants of the Lord which made heaven and earth.

14 And as for this house, it was builded many years ago by a king of Israel great and strong, and was finished.

15 But when our fathers provoked God unto wrath, and sinned against the Lord of Israel which is in heaven, he gave them over into the power of Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon, of the Chaldees;

See, for instance, Judg. v. 12. Ps. lxxviii. 18. Is. xx. 4, *Margin.* Hab. i. 9. Eph. 4. 8. Compare vii. 6; and ix. 4, "Cast away from the congregation of the captivity."

7. "Greeting." The Greek salutation at the beginning of letters. So viii. 9. 1 Macc. x. 25; xi. 32. 2 Macc. xi. 34; and Acts xv. 23; xxiii. 26. St. James i. 1. In Ezra v. 7 (compare iv. 17.), we have the Oriental salutation, "Peace!"

8. "The ancients;" ver. 27, "the elders of the Jews." See on vii. 2.

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16 who pulled down the house, and burned it, and carried away the people captives unto Babylon.

17 But in the first year that king Cyrus reigned over the country of Babylon Cyrus the king wrote to build up this house.

18 And the holy vessels of gold and of silver, that Nabuchodonosor had carried away out of the house at Jerusalem, and had set them in his own temple, those Cyrus the king brought forth again out of the temple at Babylon, and they were delivered to ²Zorobabel and to Sanabassar the ruler,

² Or, Zorobabel, which is also Sanabassar the ruler, so as Zorobabel seemeth to be added to the text, Ezra 1. 8.

19 with commandment that he should carry away the same vessels, and put them in the temple at Jerusalem; and that the temple of the Lord should be built in his place.

20 Then the same Sanabassar, being come hither, laid the foundations of the house of the Lord at Jerusalem; and from that time to this being still a building, it is not yet fully ended.

³ Or, rolls. 21 Now therefore, if it seem good unto the king, let search be made among the ³ records of king Cyrus:

22 and if it be found that the building of the house of the Lord at Jerusalem hath been done with the consent of king Cyrus, and if our lord the king be so minded, let him signify unto us thereof.

18. "To Zorobabel and to Sanabassar." Sanabassar is the form under which (ii. 12.) Sheshbazzar, the other name of Zorobabel, appears in this book. One name may perhaps have been placed in the margin as an explanation of the other, and so have crept into the text (see the *Margin* here). Taking, however, the text as it stands, it will be better to translate, "to Zorobabel, even to Sanabassar." Some manuscripts omit the "and," and transpose the names, reading, "to Sanabassar, Zorobabel." "Zorobabel," vv. 27, 29.

20. "Being still a building." "a" is the shortened form of a preposition, in or on. "The mixed multitude that was among them 'fell 'a' lusting" (Num. xi. 4.). "She lay 'a' dying," "And as he 'was yet 'a' coming" (St. Luke viii. 42; ix. 42.). "I go 'a' fishing" (St. John xxi. 3.). "A-foot (Acts xx. 13.). "He fell a-sleep" (Acts vii. 60.). The uncontracted form occurs in Acts xiii. 36, "fell on sleep and saw corruption." In Chaucer, one of our earliest English writers, such expressions frequently occur, both in their full and their contracted forms, some of which still continue in common use. We find, "'a' bed," "'a' fire," "'a' Godde's name;" "To gon 'a' begging in my kittle bare," &c. Also, "Ride on hauking;" "On hunting ben 'they ridden."

I. (III.) ESDRAS, VI.

23 °Then commanded king Darius to seek among the records at Babylon: and so at Ecbatana the palace, which is in the country of Media, there was found a ²roll wherein these things were recorded.

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c Ezra 6. 1, &c.
² Or, place.

24 In the first year of the reign of Cyrus king Cyrus commanded that the house of the Lord at Jerusalem should be built again, where they do sacrifice with continual fire:

25 whose height shall be sixty cubits, and the breadth sixty cubits, with three rows of hewn stones, and one row of new wood of that country; and the expences thereof to be given out of the house of king Cyrus:

26 and that the holy vessels of the house of the Lord, both of gold and silver, that Nabuchodonosor took out of the house at Jerusalem, and brought to Babylon, should be restored to the house at Jerusalem, and be set in the place where they were before.

27 And also he commanded that Sisinnes the governor of Syria and Phenice, and Sathrabuzanes, and their companions, and those which were appointed rulers in Syria and Phenice, should be

23—34. The Answer of Darius.

Ezra vi. 1—12.

There has already been given in the legendary history an account of the "letters" which "Darius" wrote (iv. 48—56), granting great privileges and immunities to the Jews.

23. "A roll." This reading, supported by the Alexandrian and other manuscripts, is better than the marginal reading, "place." There is only the difference of a single letter between the two words in the Greek (Ezra vi. 2.).

24. "Where they do sacrifice with continual fire." The words "with continual fire" do not occur in Ezra. Compare Exod. xxix. 42; xxx. 8. Num. xxviii. 6.

27. "And also he commanded that Sisinnes," &c. As it is not till the next verse that Darius is made to begin his own decree confirming the decree of Cyrus, with the sentence, "I have commanded also," these words in ver. 27 appear as if left to be read as part of the recital of the previous decree of Cyrus, which is thus made to be addressed to Sisinnes and Sathrabuzanes (Tatnai and Shethar-boznai, Ezra v. 3, 6; vi. 6, 13.), the same persons as those to whom Darius is writing now. It need hardly be said in what confusion this would involve the narrative; though in Josephus also (*Antiq.* XI. i. 3.) there is given a long and fictitious letter, compounded out of Ezra i. confused with Ezra vi., purporting to be addressed by Cyrus to Sisinnes

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careful not to meddle with the place, but suffer Zorobabel, the servant of the Lord, and governor of Judea, and the elders of the Jews, to build the house of the Lord in that place.

28 I have commanded also to have it built up whole again; and that they look diligently to help those that be of the captivity of the Jews, till the house of the Lord be finished:

29 and out of the tribute of Celosyria and Phenice a portion carefully to be given these men for the

and Sathrabuzanes, telling them that he had allowed the Jews under Zerubbabel to return and rebuild their city and temple, &c. The same persons to whom the decree and commandment of Cyrus is represented as having been originally addressed, now write to ask if there had ever been such a decree issued at all. Of Sisinnes and Sathrabuzanes as governors at this earlier period in the reign of Cyrus, no mention is made in the authentic history; and the names of other persons are given as those holding positions of authority in a subsequent reign (Ezra iv. 7, 9, 17, 23. 1 Esdr. ii. 16.). Even so careless a writer as the compiler of 1 Esdras must, one would suppose, have seen these difficulties if he had thought about the matter, but apparently he did not think, and so, copying Ezra incorrectly, he ran on too far with the indirect narrative, leaving it to his readers to try to correct him by supplying Darius, from ver. 23, as the person who gave the commandment to Sisinnes. Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. iv. 6.) takes not only ver. 27, but, as he had done before (*Antiq.* XI. i. 3.), all the rest of the chapter to ver. 33, that is, the whole letter of Darius, as part of the decree of Cyrus found at Ecbatana. But, intending to remove the difficulties caused by the names of Sisinnes and Sathrabuzanes in ver. 27, he omits them, but falls into further confusion of his own making, by reading the passage thus: "He," i.e. Cyrus, "also commanded . . . that the care of these things should belong to "Sanabassar (Abassarus), the governor and president of Syria and "Phenicia, and to his associates, that they should not meddle with "that place" ("Be ye far from thence," Ezra vi. 6), "but permit the servants of God, the Jews and their rulers, to build the Temple." Sana-bassar (Abassarus) is the name which Josephus gives to Sheshbazzar or Zerubbabel (*Antiq.* XI. i. 3; XI. iv. 4. 1 Esdr. ii. 12, 15; vi. 18, 20.); so that Josephus not only confuses together the decrees of Cyrus and Darius (*Antiq.* XI. i. 3; and XI. iv. 6.), but, according to his present text, transforms Sheshbazzar the leader of the returning exiles into the governor and president of Syria and Phenice, and makes Cyrus forbid him to interfere with himself, or hinder his own work: unless we are to suppose (see also ver. 18.) that Josephus takes Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar to be different persons.

29. Compare also viii. 13—21. Other instances in which heathen princes gave gifts towards the support of the worship of God at Jerusalem, may be found in 1 Macc. x. 39—45. 2 Macc. iii. 3. Compare also 2 Macc. ix. 16, and the imaginary letter of Darius, above, iv. 51—56.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, VII.

sacrifices of the Lord, *that is*, to Zorobabel the governor, for bullocks, and rams, and lambs ;

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30 and also corn, salt, wine, and oil, and that continually every year without further question, according as the priests that be in Jerusalem shall signify to be daily spent :

31 that ²offerings may be made to the most high God for the king and for his children, and that they may pray for their lives. ² Or, *drink offerings.*

32 And he commanded that whosoever should transgress, yea, or make light of any thing afore spoken or written, out of his own house should a tree be taken, and he thereon be hanged, and all his goods seized for the king.

33 The Lord therefore, whose name is there called upon, utterly destroy every king and nation, that stretcheth out his hand to hinder or endamage that house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

34 I Darius the king have ordained that according unto these things it be done with diligence.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Sisinnos and others help forward the building.* 5 *The temple is finished, and dedicated.* 10 *The passover is kept.*

THEN ^aSisinnos the governor of Celosyria and ^aEzra 6. 13. Phenice, and Sathrabuzanes, with their com-

32. "Out of his house should a tree be taken." Wood for a gallows or a cross. Some well remembered texts of Holy Scripture keep us still familiar with such an expression as "hanged on a tree" (Deut. xxi. 22, 23. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Compare Esth. ii. 23, and v. 14 ; vii. 9, *Margin*), though "tree" in the general sense of "wood," or "treen" for "wooden," have now become obsolete. In Chaucer, we have "Christes sweet tree;" and "vessels of tree," as distinguished from vessels of gold.

"And all his goods seized for the king." So Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. iv. 6, and XI. i. 3.). The Ancient Versions support this translation of the Chaldee word in Ezra vi. 11. Dan. ii. 5 ; iii. 29 ; but on the whole there would seem to be more authority for the English Version, which renders in all three places, "his house shall be made a dunghill" (compare 2 Kin. x. 27.).

CHAPTER VII.

The Completion and Dedication of the Temple.

The Feast of the Passover.

Ezra vi. 13—22.

1. "Sisinnos . . . Sathrabuzanes." See vi. 3.

"Celosyria and Phenice." See ii. 17 ; vi. 3.

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panions, following the commandments of king Darius,

2 did very carefully oversee the holy works, assisting the ancients of the Jews and governors of the temple.

3 And so the holy works prospered, when Aggeus and Zacharias the prophets prophesied.

4 And they finished these things by the commandment of the Lord God of Israel, and with ²the consent of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia.

5 And thus was the holy house finished in ³the three and twentieth day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of Darius king of the Persians.

6 And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and others that were of the captivity, that were added unto them, did according to the things written in the book of Moses.

7 And to the dedication of the temple of the Lord they offered an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs;

8 and twelve goats for the sin of all Israel, according to the number of the ⁴chief of the tribes of Israel.

9 The priests also and the Levites stood arrayed

2. This is an addition by the writer of 1 Esdras.

"Ancients of the Jews;" vi. 8. Josephus (XI. iv. 7.) prefers to say, "Princes of the Sanhedrin." "Ancients" (Judith vi. 16; viii. 10; x. 6; xv. 8.): the word is more usually, as in the Gospels, translated "elders." In Susanna, the translators replace "ancients," in ver. 5, by "elders," in vv. 8, 16, 19, 24, &c.

4. "Artaxerxes." See Ezra vi. 14. His name is added by anticipation, as that of one who followed the example of Cyrus and Darius in showing kindness to the Jewish nation.

5. "Three and twentieth day of the month Adar." So Josephus; but Ezra vi. 15, "on the third day."

"Adar," the last month in the Jewish year, February and March (see on Esth. ix. 21.).

6. "Others that were of the captivity, that were added unto 'them.'" Who were these persons? it might be asked. The apparent difficulty arises merely from the omission of the article; "the others," i.e. "the rest of the children of the captivity" (Ezra vi. 16.). "The 'children of Israel,'" at the beginning of the verse, is a general description of the whole community, namely, the priests, the Levites, and the others who were of the captivity, joined to them and taking part in the festival.

I. (III.) ESDRAS, VII.

in their vestments, according to their ² kindreds, in the service of the Lord God of Israel, according to the book of Moses : and the porters at every gate.

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10 And the children of Israel ³ that were of the captivity held the passover the fourteenth day of the first month, after that the priests and the Levites were sanctified.

² Heb.
divisions,
Ezra 6. 18.
³ Or,
with those
that, &c.

11 They that were of the captivity were not all sanctified together : but the Levites were all sanctified together.

12 And so they offered the passover for all them of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.

13 And the children of Israel that came out of

9. "In their vestments." Not in Ezra (compare above, i. 2 ; v. 59.).

"The porters at every gate." Not in Ezra (compare above, i. 16.).

"According to their kindreds;" i. 10. "Their divisions" (*Margin.* Ezra vi. 18, *Note.*).

11. In some manuscripts of the Greek the latter part of this verse is omitted ; in all the most ancient and important manuscripts "not" is left out. The last words seem but a repetition of the last words of the verse before. In the first part of the verse our translators have followed the Latin translation (*Vulgate*), in which, as in some Greek manuscripts, an alteration has been made by inserting "not," apparently from conjecture, in order to give some more distinct force to the words at the end, repeated from ver. 10, "the Levites were all sanctified together," though the people were not all sanctified. The Greek text, however, though some words appear to have become needlessly repeated in the course of transcription, says that "all the children of the Captivity were sanctified;" and Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. iv. 8.) seems to have found some such reading in his copy, as he says that all the people "celebrated the festival, having purified themselves, with their wives and children." A reference to 2 Chr. xxx. 17—19, may suggest that it was not quite needless to state that all the people were sanctified, for in that memorable Passover of Hezekiah, many had, from various causes, omitted the necessary ceremonies of purification.

12. The Levites slew the Paschal victims for the people and for the priests. For the people, in order to give greater solemnity and reverence to the service ; or, according to the Latin translation, followed by the English in ver. 11, to avoid any risk of neglect or impurity on the part of the people : the Levites doing now as they had done on the former occasion, at the Passover of Hezekiah (2 Chr. xxx. 17—19.). And for "their brethren the priests," in order to leave them more free for their own more sacred and special duties. In the passover in the time of Josiah, the priests, though, as now, relieved by the Levites from the task of slaying the victims, and other more laborious parts of the ceremony, were occupied till night in offering the burnt offerings (i. 14 ; and 2 Chr. xxxv. 14.).

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the captivity did eat, even all they that had separated themselves from the abominations of the people of the land, and sought the Lord.

14 And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days, making merry before the Lord,

² Or, *mind*.

15 for that he had turned the ² counsel of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the works of the Lord God of Israel.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *Esdras bringeth the king's commission to build.* 8 *The copy of it.* 28 *He declareth the names and number of those that came with him,* 61 *and his journey.* 71 *He lamenteth the sins of his people,* 96 *and swear-eth the priests to put away their strange wives.*

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AND after these things, when Artaxerxes the king of the Persians reigned, came Esdras the son of Saraias, the son of ^a Ezerias, the son of Helchiah, the son of Salum,

^a *Azarias.*

^b *Ozias.*

^c *Meraioth.*

^d *Uzzi:* Some copies want these three names.

³ Heb. *was first,* Ezra 7. 1.

2 the son of Sadduc, the son of Achitob, the son of Amarias, the son of ^b Ezias, the son of ^c Meremoth, the son of Zarahias, the son of ^d Savias, the son of Bocceas, the son of Abisum, the son of Phinees, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron ³ the chief priest.

14. "The feast of unleavened bread seven days." Compare i. 19.

15. "King of Assyria." See Ezra vi. 22. This title is given to Darius, in that he held the dominions formerly possessed by the "great king, the King of Assyria."

CHAPTER VIII.

1—8. The Genealogy of Esdras, and brief introductory mention of his going up to Jerusalem.

1 Esdr. viii. repeats Ezra vii.—x. 5.

1. "After these things." The writer follows Ezra. An interval of nearly sixty years intervenes between the sixth year of Darius (vii. 5.) and the seventh year of Artaxerxes (viii. 6.), B.C. 515—457.

"When Artaxerxes the king of the Persians reigned." Artaxerxes, surnamed Longimanus ("Longhand"), the son of Xerxes, B.C. 464—425. Josephus is mistaken in supposing that this king and the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah (ii. 1; v. 14; xiii. 6.) was Xerxes, the son of Darius.

1, 2. The genealogy of Ezra is abbreviated here, as in Ezra. Thus, several generations intervened between Ezra and his ancestor the High Priest Saraias, who had been put to death by the King of Babylon a hundred and thirty years before this (2 Kin. xxv. 18, 21.). Six names also, found in 1 Chr. vi. 7—9, are omitted, as in Ezra, between Ezias (Azariah) and Meremoth (Meraioth). The name Uzzi (Ezra vii. 14. 1 Chr. vi. 5.) has been much corrupted before it appears under such a form as Savias. In 2 Esdr. i. 2, where also there is found a genealogy of Esdras, the name is given as Ozias.

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3 This Esdras went up from Babylon, as a scribe, being very ready in the law of Moses, that was given by the God of Israel. Before
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4 And the king did him honour: for he found grace in his sight in all his requests.

5 There went up with him also certain of the children of Israel, of the priests, of the Levites, of the holy singers, porters, and ² ministers of the temple, ² Or, *Nethinims.* unto Jerusalem,

6 in ³ the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, ³ See Ezra 7. 7, 8, 9. in the fifth month, this was the king's seventh year; for they went from Babylon in the first day of the first month, and came to Jerusalem, according to the ⁴ prosperous journey which the Lord gave them. ⁴ Or, *success.*

7 For Esdras had very great skill, so that he omitted nothing of the law and commandments of the Lord, but taught all Israel the ordinances and judgments.

8 Now the copy of the ⁵ commission, which was ⁵ Or, *decree.* written from Artaxerxes the king, and came to Esdras the priest and reader of the law of the Lord, is this that followeth;

9 King Artaxerxes unto Esdras the priest and reader of the law of the Lord sendeth greeting: 457.

10 Having determined to deal graciously, I have given order, that such of the nation of the Jews, and of the priests and Levites, being within our realm, as are willing and desirous, should go with thee unto Jerusalem.

11 As many therefore as have a mind thereunto, let them depart with thee, as it hath seemed good both to me and my seven friends the counsellors;

5. "The holy singers." See on v. 27.

"Ministers of the temple." The Temple servants, the Nethinim (see on v. 29.).

8—24. Copy of the Commission of Artaxerxes.

8, 9. "Reader of the law of the Lord" (ver. 19. Compare ix. 39, 49.).

9. "Greeting." The Greek salutation (See vi. 7.). In Ezra, the copy of the letter is given in the original Chaldee.

10. "Having determined to deal graciously." A similar benevolent profession is prefixed also to the letter as given in Josephus (XI. v. 1.).

11. "My seven friends the counsellors;" Ezra vii. 14. See on Esth. i. 14.

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12 that they may look unto the affairs of Judea and Jerusalem, agreeably to that which is in the law of the Lord ;

13 and carry the gifts unto the Lord of Israel to Jerusalem, which I and my friends have vowed, and all the gold and silver that in the country of Babylon can be ² found, to the Lord in Jerusalem,

14 with that also which is given of the people for the temple of the Lord their God at Jerusalem : and that silver and gold may be collected for bullocks, rams, and lambs, and things thereunto appertaining ;

15 to the end that they may offer sacrifices unto the Lord upon the altar of the Lord their God, which is in Jerusalem.

16 And whatsoever thou and thy brethren will do ³ with the silver and gold, that do, according to the will of thy God.

17 And the holy vessels of the Lord, which are given thee for the use of the temple of thy God, which is in Jerusalem, thou shalt set before thy God in Jerusalem.

18 And whatsoever thing else thou shalt remember for the use of the temple of thy God, thou shalt give it out of the king's treasury.

19 And I king Artaxerxes have also commanded the keepers of the treasures in Syria and Phenice, that whatsoever Esdras the priest and the reader of the law of the most high God shall send for, they should give it him with speed,

20 to the sum of an hundred talents of silver, likewise also of wheat even to an hundred ⁴ cors, and an hundred pieces of wine, and other things in abundance.

21 Let all things be performed after the law of God

19, 23. "Syria and Phenice;" See on ver. 67, and ii. 25.

20. These amounts are the same as those given in Ezra vii. 22, but the oil and salt are not separately mentioned, but included in the general words, "other things in abundance." "An hundred talents of silver" would amount to some £45,000, if we take the Hebrew talent (3,000 shekels, Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26.) as equal to £450. With respect to the "cor" of wheat, the statements of Josephus and others are too conflicting to enable us to state its amount. In one place Josephus (*Antiq.* XV. ix. 2.) says that the cor equals ten Attic "medimni," or something under fifteen bushels. A "piece" of wine is less than nine gallons. The Greek word used here and in the Greek version (LXX.) of 2 Chr. iv. 5, is the same as that employed by St. John ii. 6 ("metretes") which our version there renders "firkin." In Ezra vii. 22. 2 Chr. iv. 5, the Hebrew word is

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diligently unto the most high God, that wrath come not upon the kingdom of the king and his sons.

22 I command you also, that ye require no tax, nor any other imposition, of any of the priests, or Levites, or holy singers, or porters, or ministers of the temple, or of any that have doings in this temple, and that no man have authority to impose any thing upon them.

23 And thou, Esdras, according to the wisdom of God ordain judges and justices, that they may judge in all Syria and Phenice² all those that know the law of thy God; and those that know it not thou shalt teach.

24 And^e whosoever shall transgress the law of thy God, and of the king, shall be punished diligently, whether it be by death, or other punishment, by penalty of money, or by imprisonment.

25 ¶ Then said Esdras the scribe, Blessed be the only Lord God of my fathers, who hath put these things into the heart of the king, to glorify his house that is in Jerusalem:

26 and hath honoured me in the sight of the king, and his counsellors, and all his friends and nobles.

27 Therefore was I encouraged by the help of the Lord my God, and gathered together men of Israel to go up with me.

28 And these are the chief according to their families and several dignities, that went up with me from Babylon in the reign of king Artaxerxes:

“bath,” which, according to Josephus (*Antiq.* VIII. ii. 9.), was equal to (72 “sextaries,” that is) the “metretes.”

24. “Or other punishment.” “Other” is inserted by the translators. The Greek word here rendered “punishment” (compare 2 Macc. vii. 7.), as also the word, which may be rendered “chastisement,” used in the Greek version (LXX.) of Ezra vii. 26, may suggest bodily punishment, such as scourging (compare St. Matt. x. 17, &c.); but, in the original passage (Ezra vii. 26.), our version seems right in rendering the Chaldee by “banishment,” under which is probably included excommunication (Ezra x. 8. Compare St. John ix. 22; xii. 42; xvi. 2.).

25—27. Ezra's Thanksgiving.

Ezra vii. 27, 28.

28—61. The Names and Numbers of those who went up with Ezra, and some Incidents in the Journey to Jerusalem.

28. “Several dignities.” See on i. 5.

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- 29 of the sons of Phinees, Gerson : of the sons of Ithamar, ^fGamael : of the sons of David, ^gLettus ^hthe son of Sechenias :
- ^f Or, *Daniel*.
^g Or, *Chattus*.
^h Ezra 8. 3, of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Parosh.
ⁱ Zerachiah. 30 of the sons of Pharez, Zacharias ; and with him were counted an hundred and fifty men :
- 31 of the sons of Pahath Moab, Eliaonias, the son of ⁱZaraias, and with him two hundred men :
- ^k Or, of the sons of Shechaniah the son of Jahaziel. 32 ^k of the sons of Zathoe, Sechenias the son of Jezelus, and with him three hundred men : of the sons of Adin, Obeth the son of Jonathan, and with him ²two hundred and fifty men :
- ² Heb. *fifty men*.
^l Or, *Athaliah*. 33 of the sons of Elam, Josias son of ^lGotholias, and with him seventy men :
- ^m Or, *Zebadiah*. 34 of the sons of Saphatias, ^mZaraias son

29. "Of the sons of Phinees, Gerson: of the sons of Ithamar, "Gamael" ("Daniel," Ezra viii. 2.). The number of the priests is not given, but only the names of the heads of the houses (Phinees and Ithamar. See 1 Chr. vi. 3, 4.). Certainly, more than two priests accompanied Ezra (Ezra viii. 15, 24. 1 Esdr. viii. 54.); but it is not likely that any large number went up now, as more than four thousand had already gone up with Zerubbabel.

"Of the sons of David, Lettus" (Hattush) "the son of Sechenias." So Ezra viii. 2, 3, when correctly punctuated, "Of the sons of David, "Hattush of the sons of Shechaniah." Hattush (or Lettus) was the grandson of Shechaniah (1 Chr. iii. 22.). It may be inferred from 1 Chr. iii. 21, 22, that the house of Shechaniah was a numerous one, but only one family, that of Hattush, is spoken of as going up now with Ezra. The number of these returning descendants of David, who probably, like the priests just before mentioned, were but few, is not stated.

29—40. This list is intended to correspond with the list given in Ezra viii. 2—14: the chief variations of names and numbers are given in the *Margin*. In ver. 40, Istalcurus is a strange representation of the name which appears in Ezra viii. 14 as Zabbud, or (according to the reading which may be preferred) Zaccur. In two cases this list seems more correct than that given in Ezra, and appears to have preserved two names of heads of families (Zathoe or Zattu, ver. 32, and Banid or Bani, ver. 36.) which have fallen out from the text of Ezra (see on Ezra viii. 5.). The sum of the numbers of those who went up with Ezra, including the 38 Levites and the 220 Nethinim, amounts to 1,948 according to 1 Esdras; but, according to Ezra, only 1,754. To both these totals, however, something must be added for the priests (vv. 29, 54.), whose numbers are not given; and perhaps also for "the sons of David," if Lettus (Hattush) is to be taken as the name of the head of a house. Unless we understand "with him" (vv. 30, 31, &c.) to mean, as is most likely, "including him," we must add also some fourteen names of the chiefs or heads of families.

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of Michael, and with him ⁿ threescore and ten men :

35 of the sons of Joab, ^o Abadias son of ^p Jezelus, and with him two hundred and ^q twelve men :

36 ^r of the sons of Banid, Assalimoth son of Josaphias, and with him an hundred and threescore men :

37 of the sons of Babi, Zacharias son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight men :

38 of the sons of ^s Astath, Johannes son of ^t Acatan, and with him an hundred and ten men :

39 of the sons of Adonikam the last, and these are the names of them, Eliphalet, Jeuel, and ^u Samaias, and with them ^x seventy men :

40 of the sons of ^y Bago, Uthi the son of Istalcurus, and with him seventy men.

41 And these I gathered together ^z to the river called Theras, where we pitched our tents three days : and then ^a I surveyed them.

42 But when I had found there none of the priests and Levites,

43 then sent I unto Eleazar, and ^b Iduel, and ^c Masman,

44 and Alnathan, and Mamaias, and ^d Joribas, and Nathan, Eunatan, Zacharias, and Mosollamon, principal men and learned.

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ⁿ Or, four-score men.

^o Or, Obadiah.

^p Or, Jehiel.

^q Or, eighteen men.

^r Or, of the sons of She-lomith the son of Josaphiah.

^s Or, Azgad.

^t Or, Cutan.

^u Or, Shemaia.
^x Or, sixty men.

^y Heb. Bigrai.

^z Or, to the river called Ahava, Ezra 8. 15.

^a Or, he numbered the people and the priests : but found none of the sons of Levi.

^b Or, Ariel.

^c Or, She-maiah.

^d Or, Jarib. These men's names with their generations are rightly distinguished, Ezra 8. 16.

41. "The river called Theras." So ver. 61. In Ezra viii. 15, 21, 31, we have, "the river of Ahava." This first gathering place seems to have been somewhere not far from Babylon, but the locality has not been identified (see also on ver. 50.).

42, 46. "I found there none of the priests . . . to send such men as should execute the priests' office." In the passage from Ezra (viii. 15.) from which this is taken, the presence of the priests is expressly noted (see also Ezra viii. 24. 1 Esdr. viii. 54.), and Ezra's complaint is that he "found there none of the sons of Levi." The priests had formed more than a tenth part of the whole number who returned with Zerubbabel, but the Levites had been very few (see on Ezra ii. 36.). Only thirty-eight Levites returned now.

43. "Masman." The corresponding name in Ezra is Shemaiah, to which Masman can hardly be said to have much resemblance. An additional name, not found at all in Ezra, which seems like another form of this, Mamias, has been inserted in ver. 44.

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^d Or, *Iddo*.

^e Or, *of*.

^f Or,

Casiphia.

^g Or, *the
Nethinims
at the place
of Casiphia*.

^h Or, *Machli*.

ⁱ Or, *Shere-
biah, Ezra
8. 18.*

^k Or, *Also
Hashabiah,
and with him
Jeshaiiah of
the sons of
Merari with
his brethren,
Ezra 8. 19.*

² Or, *pro-
claimed*.

45 And I bade them that they should go unto ^d Saddeus the captain, ^e who was in the place of ^f the treasury :

46 and commanded them that they should speak unto Daddeus, and to ^g his brethren, and to the treasurers in that place, to send us such men as might execute the priests' office in the house of the Lord.

47 And by the mighty hand of our Lord they brought unto us skilful men of the sons of ^h Moli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, ⁱ Asebebia, and his sons, and his brethren, who were eighteen.

48 ^k And Asebia, and Annuus, and Osaïas his brother, of the sons of Channuneus, and their sons, were twenty men.

49 And of the servants of the temple whom David had ordained, and the principal men for the service of the Levites, to wit, the servants of the temple, two hundred and twenty, the catalogue of whose names were shewed.

50 And there I ² vowed a fast unto the young men before our Lord, to desire of him a prosperous

45, 46. "Saddeus" and "Daddeus" are both meant to represent Iddo, the name as given in Ezra viii. 17. The name is variously written; in some copies "Doldæus," in others "Loddæus." Our version, without authority, gives the name as "Saddeus" and as "Daddeus," so that the same man's name is written differently in the two verses.

"Place of the treasury . . . treasurers in that place." In Ezra viii. 17, the Latin and the English Versions take "Casaphia" as the name of some place unknown. But, as in Hebrew the word for silver, or money ("ceseph"), closely resembles Casaphia, the Greek translation (LXX.) has rendered it "silver" in Ezra viii. 17. The writer of 1 Esdras, misled apparently by the Greek, has rendered the words, "the place of the treasury," instead of "the place Casaphia."

48. "Annuus." There is no name in Ezra for which this may be supposed to stand; while the strange name "Channuneus" has been substituted for Merari.

49. "Servants of the temple" (vv. 5, 22. See on v. 29.). A translation, or explanation, of the word "Nethinim" (Ezra viii. 20.), "given," or "devoted," which had come to be used as a proper name.

"Whom David had appointed" (Greek, "gave," as in Ezra viii. 20.). As David had arranged the order of the services of the Levites (1 Chr. xxiv. 20; xxv.; xxvi.), it would necessarily follow that he had, directly or indirectly, arranged also the services of the Nethinim who had been given to wait on them.

50. "And there I vowed a fast unto the young men before our Lord." In Ezra viii. 21 we have, "I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava." In the other two places where the river of Ahava

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journey both for us and them that were with us, for our children, and for the ²cattle :

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51 for I was ashamed to ask the king footmen, and horsemen, and conduct for safeguard against our adversaries.

² Heb. substance.

52 For we had said unto the king, that the power of the Lord our God should be with them that seek him, to support them in all ways.

53 And again we besought our Lord as touching these things, and found him favourable unto us.

54 Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, ¹Esebrias, and Assanias, and ten men of their brethren with them :

¹ *Serebias, and Hassibias.*

55 and I weighed them the gold, and the silver, and the holy vessels of the house of our Lord, which the king, and his council, and the princes, and all Israel, had given.

56 And when I had weighed it, I delivered unto them six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and

is spoken of, the writer of 1 Esdras takes it as a proper name, "the river called Theras" (vv. 41, 61.). It seems useless to conjecture why, without any authority, he has made this alteration here. It is, however, an alteration purposely made, as, in order to be consistent with himself, he has made another alteration in ver. 53, by the insertion of the word "again;" so as to imply that there were two occasions of fasting and supplication. From the connection of vv. 50, 51, the writer seems to have supposed that, as the "young men" were to act instead of the guards which Esdras was ashamed to ask from the king, a special fast was held for them, to encourage them to be more bold and watchful.

54. "Esebrias, and Assanias" (or Samias), "and ten of their brethren with them" (Ezra viii. 24, and *Note*). The present translation implies that these were priests, but Esebrias and Assanias (which names are intended to represent Sherebiah and Hashabiah) were Levites (see vv. 47, 48; and Ezra viii. 18, 19.). Our version omits here the word "and" before Esebrias; we should read, as in the Greek, "Then separated I twelve of the chief of the priests; and Esebrias and Assanias and ten of their brethren with them." The treasure was committed to the charge of twelve priests and twelve Levites (compare ver. 60, "the priests and the Levites, who had received the silver and the gold," &c.).

56. We have here, and in the Greek translation of Ezra (LXX.), the same large sums as in Ezra viii. 26. As observed in the *Note* there, a hundred talents of gold would amount, if we accept the statement of Josephus as to the value of the talent, to more than a million sterling. Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. v. 2.), in his enumeration of these treasures brought up by Esdras, omits the hundred talents of gold, and has "gold vessels, twenty talents," instead of the "twenty golden vessels" of ver. 57.

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² H. b. *two
vessels, Ezra
8. 27.*

silver vessels of an hundred talents, and an hundred talents of gold,

57 and twenty golden vessels, and ² twelve vessels of brass, even of fine brass, glittering like gold.

58 And I said unto them, Both ye are holy unto the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the gold and the silver is a vow unto the Lord, the Lord of our fathers.

59 Watch ye, and keep them till ye deliver them to the chief of the priests and Levites, and to the principal men of the families of Israel, in Jerusalem, into the chambers of the house of our God.

60 So the priests and the Levites, who had received the silver and the gold and the vessels, brought them unto Jerusalem, into the temple of the Lord.

61 And from the river Theras we departed the twelfth day of the first month, and came to Jerusalem by the mighty hand of our Lord, which was with us: and from the ³ beginning of our journey the Lord delivered us from every enemy, and so we came to Jerusalem.

³ Or, *dangers
in the way.*

62 And when we had been there three days, the gold and silver that was weighed was delivered in the house of our Lord on the fourth day ⁴ unto Mar-moth the priest the son of Iri.

⁴ Or, *unto
Merimoth
the son of
Uriah the
priest.*

63 And with him was Eleazar the son of Phinees, and with them were Josabad the son of Jesu and ⁵ Moeth the son of Sabban, Levites: all was *delivered them* by number and weight.

⁵ Or, *Noadiah
the son of
Binnui.*

64 And all the weight of them was written up the same hour.

57. "Twenty golden vessels." In Ezra viii. 27 is added their value, a thousand darics.

"Twelve vessels of brass." Ezra has "two vessels." Josephus adds, that these vessels of brass were twelve talents in weight.

60. "Brought them to Jerusalem." Our translation here follows an alteration made by the Latin Version.

61—72. Arrival of Esdras at Jerusalem. His Grief at hearing that the Holy Seed was mixed with the Strange People of the Land.

61. "The river Theras." See ver. 41.

63. "Moeth the son of Sabban." In Ezra viii. 33, these names appear in quite another form, "Noadiah the son of Binnui."

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65 Moreover they that were come out of the captivity offered sacrifice unto the Lord God of Israel, even twelve bullocks for all Israel, fourscore and sixteen rams,

66 ² threescore and twelve lambs, goats for a peace offering, twelve; all of them a sacrifice to the Lord.

67 And they delivered the king's commandments unto the king's stewards, and to the governors of Celosyria and Phenice; and they honoured the people and the temple of God.

68 Now when these things were done, the rulers came unto me, and said,

69 The nation of Israel, the princes, the priests and Levites, have not put away from them the strange people of the land, nor the pollutions of the Gentiles, *to wit*, of the Canaanites, Hittites, Pheresites, Jebusites, and the Moabites, Egyptians, and Edomites.

70 ^m For both they and their sons have married ^m Ezra 9. 2. with their daughters, and the holy seed is mixed with the strange people of the land; and from the beginning of this matter the rulers and the great men have been partakers of this iniquity.

71 And as soon as I had heard these things, I rent my clothes, and the holy garment, and pulled off the hair from off my head and beard, and sat me down sad and very heavy.

72 So all they that were then moved at the word of the Lord God of Israel assembled unto me, whilst

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² Heb.
*Seventyseven
lambs, twelve
he goats for
a sin offer-
ing, Ezra
8. 35.*

66. "Threescore and twelve lambs" (6×12). So Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. v. 2.); but in Ezra viii. 35 the number is 77: a number which, though it is not a multiple of twelve, may perhaps have been adopted with reference to the sacred number, seven.

67. "Celosyria and Phenice." See on ii. 17. In some manuscripts here, Coele, or "hollow," is omitted, so that, as suggested in the Note on vi. 3, it may be only through the variations occasioned by transcription that in some places (vv. 19, 23; vi. 3, 7, 27.) we have "Syria and Phenice" instead of "Celosyria and Phenice."

69. This does not accurately follow Ezra. The Ammonites are omitted here, and the "Edomites" (compare iv. 45, 50.) are substituted for the "Amorites" of Ezra ix. 1. The Edomites are mentioned here because of the hostile feelings entertained against them, rather than on account of any prohibition in the Law (see Deut. xxiii. 7, 8.).

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I mourned for the iniquity: but I sat still full of heaviness until the evening sacrifice.

73 Then rising up from the fast with my clothes and the holy garment rent, and bowing my knees, and stretching forth my hands unto the Lord,

74 I said, O Lord, I am confounded and ashamed before thy face;

² Or, have
abounded.

75 for our sins ²are multiplied above our heads, and our ignorances have reached up unto heaven.

76 For ever since the time of our fathers we *have been* and are in great sin, even unto this day.

77 And for our sins and our fathers' we with our brethren and our kings and our priests were given up unto the kings of the earth, to the sword, and to captivity, and for a prey with shame, unto this day.

78 And now in some measure hath mercy been shewed unto us from thee, O Lord, that there should be left us a root and a name in the place of thy sanctuary;

73—90. The Prayer of Esdras.

See Ezra ix.

75. "Our ignorances have reached up to heaven." "Ignorances:" the word thus rendered occurs also in Tobit iii. 3. Heb. ix. 7, "errors." 1 Macc. xiii. 39, "oversights" (compare Heb. v. 2, and below, ix. 20.). No one is to be blamed for unavoidable ignorance, but the wilful self-chosen ignorance of those who do not care enough about God to take the trouble to learn their duty, is itself a very great sin. In the *Litany* we beseech the Good Lord "to forgive us all our sins, negligences and "ignorances." As, however, ignorance may generally, in various degrees, be admitted as some sort of palliation of guilt (St. Luke xxiii. 34. 1 Tim. i. 13.), there is a certain leniency of expression when sins are spoken of as "errors" or "mistakes;" though sometimes, as here, without any very distinct reference to its original meaning, the word seems used indefinitely for iniquities or transgressions. In Ezra ix. 6, the place from which this is taken, we have "trespass," or (*Margin*) "guiltiness."

78—81. The writer here reproduces, in a kind of paraphrase with some alterations, Ezra ix. 8, 9.

78. "A root." Compare vv. 87, 88, 89. This word replaces the word used by Ezra (see on ix. 8.), "the escaped remnant," "the remnant to "escape," and conveys the same general meaning. Though the tree, once so noble and flourishing, had been cut down, yet the root remained from which a new shoot might grow (Is. xi. 1. Compare Is. xxxvii. 31, "The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take "root downward, and bear fruit upward.").

"A name in the place of thy sanctuary." In Ezra we have the metaphor, "a nail in his holy place." "A nail:" that is, something firmly and securely fixed, so that anything can safely hang from it, depend upon it.

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79 and to discover unto us a light in the house of the Lord our God, and to give us ² food in the time of our servitude.

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80 Yea, when we were in bondage, we were not forsaken of our Lord; but he made us gracious before the kings of Persia, so that they gave us food;

² Heb. *life*,
Ezra 9. 8.

81 yea, and honoured the temple of our Lord, and raised up the desolate Sion, that they have given us a sure abiding in Jewry and Jerusalem.

82 And now, O Lord, what shall we say, having these things? for we have transgressed thy commandments, which thou gavest by the hand of thy servants the prophets, saying,

83 that the land, which ye enter into to possess as an heritage, is a land polluted with the pollutions of the strangers of the land, and they have filled it with their uncleanness.

84 Therefore now shall ye not join your daughters unto their sons, neither shall ye take their daughters unto your sons.

85 Moreover ye shall never seek to have peace

79. "A light in the house of the Lord our God." As a light shining in darkness, so was the restored Temple in the gloomy times of trouble in which their lot was cast; a source of hope and encouragement, a token of God's presence among them once more. For "light," as the symbol of hope and gladness, compare Esth. viii. 16; xi. 11. Ps. xcvi. 11. In Ezra the thought is expressed differently, "lighten our eyes" (compare Ps. xlii. 3. 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29. Job xvii. 7.); the dull dim eye being the sign of faintness and sorrow, or approaching death.

"To give us food in time of our servitude." The writer repeats this again in the next verse (80.), in both cases missing the sense of the original. The general purport of the Hebrew word in Ezra ix. 8, 9 is well given in the English Version, "reviving;" but, as the word also sometimes signifies the means of supporting life, food ("sustenance," Judg. vi. 4; "victuals," Judg. xvii. 10.), the writer of 1 Esdras takes it in that meaning, though it is not suitable here.

81. "A sure abiding." This paraphrases the more pictorial expression in Ezra, "a wall,"—protection and security.

82. "Having these things." Since things are so with us; since we have received all this mercy and kindness, notwithstanding our sins against the Lord.

"Thy commandments, which thou gavest by the hand of thy servants the prophets." "By the hand of" is the literal translation of Ezra ix. 11. The expression is frequently used; e.g. Jer. xxxvii. 2, "The words of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of the prophet Jeremiah." Compare Num. xv. 23. 2 Chr. xxix. 25. 1 Kin. xii. 15 (where there is not, as there usually is, a marginal note), &c.

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with them, that ye may be strong, and eat the good things of the land, and that ye may leave the inheritance of the land unto your children for evermore.

86 And all that is befallen is done unto us for our wicked works and great sins: for thou, O Lord, didst make our sins light,

87 and didst give unto us such a root: but we have turned back again to transgress thy law, and to mingle ourselves with the uncleanness of the nations of the land.

² Or, *Be not angry, &c.*

88 ² Mightest not thou be angry with us to destroy us, till thou hadst left us neither root, seed, nor name?

89 O Lord of Israel, thou art true: for we are left a root this day.

90 Behold, now are we before thee in our iniquities, for we cannot stand any longer by reason of these things before thee.

ⁿ Ezra 10. 1.

91 ⁿ And as Esdras in his prayer made his confession, weeping, and lying flat upon the ground before the temple, there gathered unto him from Jerusalem a very great multitude of men and women and children: for there was great weeping among the multitude.

92 Then Jechonias the son of Jeelus, one of the sons of Israel, called out, and said, O Esdras, we have sinned against the Lord God, we have

86. "Thou, O Lord, didst make our sins light." The writer of 1 Esdras adopts the word given in the Greek translation (LXX.) of Ezra ix. 13, where the Hebrew is well paraphrased in the English Version, "hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve."

viii. 91—ix. 36. The Repentance of the People, and their putting away the Strange Wives.

This portion of 1 Esdras is a repetition of Ezra x.

92. "Jechonias . . . one of the sons of Israel." In Ezra we read, "Shechaniah . . . one of the sons of Elam;" and Josephus (XI. v. 4.) has, "one Achonius by name, a principal man in Jerusalem." Can it be that this writer and Josephus thought that "Elam" might be misunderstood so as to intimate that Jechonias was an Elamite, or Persian?

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married strange women of the nations of the land,
and now is all Israel ² aloft.

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93 Let us make an oath to the Lord, that we ² will put away all our wives, which we have taken of the heathen, with their children,

Or, exalted,
Deut. 28. 13.
Baruch 2. 5.

94 like as thou hast decreed, and as many as do obey the law of the Lord.

95 Arise, and put in execution: for to thee doth this matter appertain, and we will be with thee: do valiantly.

96 So Esdras arose, and took an oath of the chief of the priests and Levites ³ of all Israel to do after these things; and so they swear.

³ Heb. and
all Israel,
Ezra 10. 5.

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3 *Esdras assembleth all the people.* 10 *They promise to put away the strange wives.* 20 *The names and number of them that did so.* 40 *The law of Moses is read and declared before all the people.* 49 *They weep, and are put in mind of the feast day.*

^a THEN Esdras rising from the court of the temple went to the chamber of Joanan the son of Eliasib,

^a Ezra 10. 6,
&c.

2 and remained there, and did eat no meat nor drink water, mourning for the great iniquities of the multitude.

3 And there was a proclamation in all Jewry and Jerusalem to all them that were of the captivity, that they should be gathered together at Jerusalem:

“And now is all Israel aloft.” The rendering is somewhat homely and obscure. The same expression in Baruch ii. 5, is rendered “exalted;” so the *Margin* here. In Baruch the word is used with reference to the enemies by whom the children of Israel were held in subjection, Israel being now (as it was threatened, Deut. xxviii. 43, 44.) under, and not above. Here the word seems used in the sense of being lifted up from dejection by the hope arising from repentance; thus expressing the same meaning as the corresponding passage in Ezra x. 2, from which it is taken, “yet now there is hope “in Israel concerning this thing.”

93. “With their children.” According to 1 Esdras, this proposal was carried out (see ix. 36.). But, from Ezra x. 19, we should infer, on the contrary, that though it was proposed (compare Ezra x. 3.) that the children should be turned away as well as the wives, it was not judged necessary to go so far as this.

96. “The priests and Levites of all Israel.” It would be better to read with the Latin, “and all Israel.” So Ezra x. 5.

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² utterly
destroyed,
Josh. 10. 28.

4 and that whosoever met not there within two or three days, according as the elders that bare rule appointed, their cattle should be seized to the use of the temple, and himself ² cast out from them that were of the captivity.

5 And in three days were all they of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin gathered together at Jerusalem the twentieth day of the ninth month.

6 And all the multitude sat trembling in the broad court of the temple because of the present foul weather.

7 So Esdras arose up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed the law in marrying strange wives, thereby to increase the sins of Israel.

8 And now by confessing give glory unto the Lord God of our fathers,

9 and do his will, and separate yourselves from the heathen of the land, and from the strange women.

10 Then cried the whole multitude, and said with a loud voice, Like as thou hast spoken, so will we do.

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4. "Should be seized to the use of the temple." So Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. v. 4.). This would fairly represent the meaning of the word used in Ezra x. 8, which means "devoted." "Devoted" is rightly placed in the *Margin* of Ezra, where the text has more indefinitely "forfeited."

"Himself cast out from them that were of the captivity." So Ezra x. 8, and Josephus (XI. v. 4.). There was no need to add the marginal note, which seems to have arisen from some mistake.

6. "The broad court of the temple." Compare vv. 38, 41. Our version, in Ezra x. 9, renders, "the street of the house of God;" but some such rendering as "open space," "broad place" (ver. 38), would now give a better meaning than "street," in such passages as these, or Esth. iv. 6, or Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16. Josephus is in error when he makes the assembly to have been held in the "upper room of the Temple."

8. "Give glory unto the Lord God." By confessing and renouncing sin, by humbleness and submission, pay homage to God, and give glory to Him as to the God Who knoweth all things, however secret, and hath power to punish or forgive. For this sense of the words "giving glory to God," by confession and acknowledgement of guilt, see Josh. vii. 19. 1 Sam. vi. 5. Jer. xiii. 16. St. John ix. 24. Rev. xi. 13; xvi. 9. In Ezra x. 11, the English Version renders, "make confession."

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11 But forasmuch as the people are many, and it is foul weather, so that we cannot stand without, and this is not a work of a day or two, seeing our sin in these things is spread far :

12 therefore let the rulers of the multitude ² stay, ² Or, stand. and let all them of our habitations that have strange wives come at the time appointed,

13 and with them the rulers and judges of every place, till we turn away the wrath of the Lord from us for this matter.

14 Then Jonathan the son of Azael and Ezechias the son of Theocanus accordingly took this matter upon them: and Mosollam and Levis and Sabbatheus helped them.

15 And they that were of the captivity did according to all these things.

16 And Esdras the priest chose unto him the principal men of their families, all by name: and in the first day of the tenth month they sat together to examine the matter.

17 So their cause that held strange wives was brought to an end in the first day of the first month. cir. 456.

14. "Theocanus" is intended to represent in a Greek form, though somewhat vaguely, the name written as Tikvah in Ezra x. 15; but "Levis" has come in through the error of mistaking for the name of a separate person the designation of Shabbethai, who in Ezra x. 15 is stated to have been a Levite.

"Took this matter upon them." This confirms the rendering given by our translators in Ezra x. 15; but the difficulty still remains, as observed in the *Note* there, that if Jonathan and his associates had the oversight of this business of the putting away the strange wives, there seems no sufficient reason why we should be told in the next sentence (see ver. 16.) that other persons were specially chosen to undertake it. The suggestion made in the *Note* on Ezra x. 15, that the Hebrew may be so rendered as to assert that these men, so far from helping forward, on the contrary opposed the whole business, will not avail us here in explanation of the meaning of the writer of 1 Esdras, as the Greek will not admit of any such rendering. It may possibly be conjectured, as one way of getting over the difficulty, that the writer of 1 Esdras meant to say that all that Jonathan and his companions undertook was to examine and enquire, to look up cases in which the Law had been transgressed, to persuade the hesitating and compel the unwilling to come before the tribunal. The exercise of the judicial functions, the giving the actual authoritative decision, rested with Ezra and those whom he had chosen as assessors.

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18 And of the priests that were come together, and had strange wives, there were found ;

19 of the sons of Jesus the son of Josedec, and his brethren ; ^b Matthelas, and Eleazar, and ^c Joribus, and ^d Joadanus.

20 And they gave their hands to put away their wives, and to offer ² rams to make reconciliation for their ^e errors.

21 And of the sons of Emmer ; Ananias, and Zabdeus, and ^f Eanes, and ^g Sameius, and ^h Hiereel, and ⁱ Azarias.

22 And of the sons of ^k Phaisur ; Elionas, Mas-sias, Ismael, and Nathanael, and ^l Ocidelus, and ^m Talsas.

23 And of the Levites ; Jozabad, and Semis, and ⁿ Kelaiah, ^o Kelitah, ^p Pethahiah, and Judas, and Jonas.

24 Of the holy singers ; ^q Eleazurus, Bacchurus.

25 Of the porters ; Sallumus, and ^r Tolbanes.

26 Of them of Israel, of the sons of ^s Phoros ; ^t Hiermas, and ^u Eddias, and Melchias, and ^x Maelus, and Eleazar, and ^y Asibias, and Baanias.

27 Of the sons of Ela ; Matthanias, Zacharias, and ^z Hierielus, and Hieremoth, and ^a Aedias.

28 And of the sons of ^b Zamoth ; ^c Eliadas, ^d Elisimus, ^e Othonias, Jarimoth, and ^f Sabatus, and ^g Sardeus.

20. "Errors." See Note on viii. 75. The word used here varies in grammatical form from that used there and in Heb. ix. 7. "Error" is the right reading here, and not "purification" (which in the original would only differ by one letter from the word rendered "error"), as placed by conjecture in the Margin. In Ezra x. 19, "trespass."

19, 21—35. These names may be compared with those given in Ezra x. The list is intended as a copy of the same list, and the names are divided in the same way into those of the Priests, the Levites, the Singers, the Porters, and the people of Israel (ver. 26.) generally. There are, however, omissions and additions, and some of the names are so corrupted and changed, that it is hard to guess what names they may have been intended to represent. The list of the names in Ezra has also, no doubt, suffered more or less in trans-
cription.

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29 Of the sons of Bebai; Johannes, and Ananias, and ^hJosabad, and ⁱAmatheis.

30 Of the sons of ^kMani; ^lOlamus, ^mMamuchus, ⁿJedeus, Jasubus, ^oJasacl, and Hieremoth.

31 ²And of the sons of Addi; Naathus, and Moosias, Lacunus, and Naidus, and Mathanias, and Sesthel, Balnuus, and Manasseas.

32 And of the sons of Annas; Elionas, and Aseas, and Melchias, and Sabbeus, and Simon Chosameus.

33 And of the sons of Asom; ^pAltaneus, and ^qMatthias, and ^rBannaia, Eliphalat, and Manasses, and Semei.

34 And of the sons of Maani; Jeremias, Momdis, Omaerus, Juel, Mabdai, and Pelias, and Anos, Carabasion, and Enasibus, and Mamnitanimus, Eliasis, Bannus, Eliali, Samis, Selemias, Nathanias: and of the sons of Ozora; Sesis, Esril, Azaelus, Samatus, Zambis, Josephus.

35 And of the sons of Ethma; Mazitias, Zabadaias, Edes, Juel, Banaia.

36 All these had taken strange wives, and they put them away with their children.

37 And the priests and Levites, and they that

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^h Zabbai.

ⁱ Athlai.

^k Bani.

^l Meshullam.

^m Malluch.

ⁿ Aduiah.

^o Sheal.

² Of the names in ver. 31, 32, 34, 35, see

Ezra 10. 30, 31, 34, &c

^p Mattenai.

^q Mattithiah.

^r Zobad.

36. "They put them away with their children." So Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. v. 4.); thus carrying out that which had been proposed in viii. 93, with which compare Ezra x. 3. But it is not said in Ezra that the children were sent away, so that we are left to infer that the children were kept when their mothers were dismissed (Ezra x. 19, 44.).

37—55. The Reading of the Law.

For this passage see Neh. vii. 73—viii. 12, and *Notes*.

This solemn reading of the Law did not take place now, but some ten years later, in the time of Nehemiah (see ver. 49.), after the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt. This extract from the Book of Nehemiah may have been added on here in order to give a more complete account of Ezra's work for the spiritual good of his people. Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. v. 5.) follows 1 Esdras in placing this reading of the Law, which Josephus makes to have taken place at the Feast of Tabernacles (but see vv. 37, 40.), immediately after the putting away of the strange wives. Josephus then adds, that after the people had returned to their homes, Ezra died in old age and honour, and was buried with great pomp at Jerusalem, about the same time that Eliashib (Neh. iii. 1; xii. 10.) succeeded his father Joacim as high priest. Josephus thus falls into a double error, not only relating this reading of the Law out of its proper place, but making Ezra die before Nehemiah

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² Or, *villages*.

¹ Neh. 8. 1.
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were of Israel, dwelt in Jerusalem, and in the country, in the first day of the seventh month: so the children of Israel were in their ² habitations.

38 ^a And the whole multitude came together with one accord into the broad place of the holy porch toward the east:

39 and they spake unto Esdras the priest and reader, that he would bring the law of Moses, that was given of the Lord God of Israel.

40 So Esdras the chief priest brought the law unto the whole multitude from man to woman, and to all the priests, to hear the law in the first day of the seventh month.

41 And he read in the broad court before the holy porch from morning unto midday, before both men and women; and all the multitude gave heed unto the law.

42 And Esdras the priest and reader of the law stood up upon a pulpit of wood, which was made *for that purpose*.

came to Jerusalem. Ezra and Nehemiah were in fact for some time contemporaries, and fellow workers in the restoration of Israel (Neh. viii. 1, 9, &c.; xii. 26, 36.).

37. "And the priests . . . dwelt in Jerusalem, and in the country, "in the first day of the seventh month: so the children of Israel "were in their habitations." The compiler has confused and misunderstood the original text which he had before him in Nehemiah, where the two clauses of which this thirty-seventh verse is made up occur as separate portions of two distinct narrations. The record of the numbers of the people who returned with Zerubbabel ends thus (Neh. vii. 73. Ezra ii. 70.): "So the priests, and the Levites, "and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the "Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities." Then Nehemiah, having ended his recital of the old record which the purpose of his history leads him to cite, goes on to relate the reading of the Law, and the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles, which took place some ninety years afterwards: "And when the seventh month was come, "and the children of Israel were in their cities, then all the people "gathered themselves together as one man to the street that was before "the water gate."

38, 41. "The broad place of the holy porch toward the east . . . "the broad court" (see on ver. 6.) "before the holy porch." In Neh. viii. 1, 3, we have, "the street," or open space, "that was before "the water gate:" the water gate was on the east (Neh. iii. 26; xii. 37. See above, v. 47.).

40. "So Esdras the chief priest." The high priest now was Eliashib (Neh. iii. 1.).

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43 And there stood up by him Mattathias, Sammus, Ananias, Azarias, Urias, ^t Ezecias, ^u Balasamus, upon the right hand :

44 and upon his left hand stood ^x Phaldaius, Misael, Melchias, ^y Lothasubus, and ^z Nabarias.

45 Then took Esdras the book of the law before the multitude : for he sat ² honourably in the first place in the sight of them all.

46 And when he opened the law, they stood all straight up. So Esdras blessed the Lord God most High, the God of hosts, Almighty.

47 And all the people answered, Amen ; and lifting up their hands they fell to the ground, and worshipped the Lord.

48 Also Jesus, Anus, Sarabias, Adinus, Jacobus, Sabateas, ^a Auteas, Maianeas, and Calitas, Azarias, and Joazabds, and Ananias, Biatas, the Levites, taught the law of the Lord, making them withal to understand it.

49 ³ Then spake Attharates unto Esdras the chief priest and reader, and to the Levites that taught the multitude, even to all, saying,

50 This day is holy unto the Lord ; (for they all wept when they heard the law :)

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^t Or, *Hilkiah*.

^u Or,
Maasiah.

^x Or, *Pedaiah*.

^y Or, *Hashum*.

^z See Neh. 8. 4.

² Heb. *above them all*.

^a Or, *Hodijah*.

³ Then *Nehemiah, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that instructed the people, said unto all the people, Neh. 8. 9.*

43. We have here seven names instead of the six in Neh. viii. 4. "Azarias" has crept in after Ananias ; and Hilkiah and Maaseiah (the names in the Hebrew of Nehemiah) appear here under the disguise of "Ezekias" and "Balasamus," or Baalsamus.

44. Six names are here given for the seven found in Neh. viii. 4 ; and "Lothasubus" and "Nabarias," which stand here as if to represent Hashum, Hashbadana, and Meshullam, may serve as illustrations of the strange corruptions which may take place in names by repeated transcription. Five names only are given here in the English, which has, without any apparent reason, omitted the last name, Zacharias.

48. These thirteen names are meant to represent the thirteen names in Neh. viii. 7, but, on comparing them, it appears that errors of transcription have caused the variations to be greater than even those which would be usually occasioned by the difficulty of reproducing Hebrew names in Greek.

49. "Then spake Attharates." See above, v. 40, "Atharias." This is a mistake, caused by the writer's having taken Nehemiah's title, in Neh. viii. 9, with the article prefixed, "the Tirshatba," as a proper name ; this has become further corrupted in transcription.

50. "They all wept when they heard the law." Though the people had hope and encouragement for the future, they might well

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^b Neh. 8. 10.

² Or, *the poor*.

51 ^b Go then, and eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send part to ² them that have nothing;

52 for this day is holy unto the Lord: and be not sorrowful; for the Lord will bring you to honour.

53 So the Levites published all things to the people, saying, This day is holy to the Lord; be not sorrowful.

54 Then went they their way, every one to eat and drink, and make merry, and to give part to them that had nothing, and to make great cheer;

55 because they understood the words wherein they were instructed, and for the which they had been assembled.

weep when they thought upon the sin and misery of the past, which might all have been escaped if the children of Israel had kept the Law of their God.

55. "The words wherein they were instructed, and for the which they had been assembled." The translation represents an attempt to make less marked the abrupt ending of the book, which in the Greek appears to have left off in the midst of a broken sentence, which included a part of the next verse (ver. 13 of Neh. viii.), thus: "because they understood the words in which they had been instructed. And there were gathered together..." Some few manuscripts add the whole of Neh. viii. 13; the Latin Version ends thus: "And they were all gathered together to Jerusalem to celebrate the glad festivity according to the appointment of the Lord God of Israel." Some have been inclined to suppose that the rest of Neh. viii., containing the account of the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles, was once appended here. Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. v. 5.), as noticed above, describes this reading of the Law, which took place on the first day of the seventh month (vv. 37, 40.), the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24.), as taking place at the Feast of Tabernacles.

II. ESDRAS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Second Book of Esdras, or, as it is more usually called, the Fourth Book of Esdras, though cited as prophetic by some early Christian writers, has never been received by the Church of England as part of Holy Scripture, and is not reckoned among the Sacred Books in the decree of the Council of Trent. St. Jerome speaks slightly of it, but owns that he had never read it. See *Note* on vii. 102*—105*, and *Introduction* to 1 Esdras.

The book, as now printed, consists of three distinct works. In the early printed editions of the Latin Vulgate they were joined together as one work, and these have been followed in the later reprints, and in the English translation. These separate portions are: *a.*, chaps. i. and ii.; *b.*, chaps. iii.—xiv.; *c.*, chaps. xv., xvi. In the Latin manuscripts they are distinguished in some way one from the other, and between *a.* and *b.* there is frequently placed the Third Book, or, as it is sometimes called, the First Book of Esdras, that is, the book beginning, "And Josias held the Feast of the Passover." The Latin manuscripts generally have five books of Esdras, which are variously arranged; one not unusual order in which the books are placed is the following: 1 Esdras (Ezra and Nehemiah); 2 Esdras (4 Esdras i., ii.); 3 Esdras (3 Esdras); 4 Esdras (4 Esdras iii.—xiv.); 5 Esdras (4 Esdras xv., xvi.).

The originals, which were in Greek, have been lost, with the exception of two small fragments of *b.* (See on 4 Esdras v. 5, 35.); and the work now only exists in translations. The English Version is made from the Latin. It is only in the Latin that we find the additional chapters, i., ii., and xv., xvi., now placed at the beginning and end of the original work (iii.—xiv.), which must once have been widely read and circulated, as we have translations into Syriac, Æthiopic, Arabic, and Armenian. Some of these translations, as the Syriac, are very ancient; the manuscript of the Syriac Version of 4 Esdras, in the Library at Milan, is ascribed to the sixth century after Christ; but we have at present no information which will enable us to say when they were first made; they are indispensable in enabling us to correct the Latin. See *Introduction* to *b.*

Of the authors of the works included in the Fourth Book of Esdras, nothing is known; and we can only make conjectures more or less probable as to the time when the several portions were written.

a. This addition, at the beginning of the book, consisting of the

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first two chapters, though the writer assumes the name and person of Esdras (i. 1; ii. 10, 33, 42.), was clearly written by a Christian; the references to the New Testament are distinct and obvious (see i. 30, 33, 37; ii. 13, 38—47.); and the rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles are spoken of in a tone and spirit which are in remarkable contradiction to the intensely Judaical temper which pervades the work to which they are now prefixed. See on i. 24; ii. 10, 33, 34; and *Introduction* to b.

The book would seem to have been written by some Christian in the West (see on i. 11.), some time, at any rate, before the ninth century, as it is contained in manuscripts of that date. There are no quotations from it in any ancient author, but some sentences in the second chapter are found in two of the Introits in the ancient Latin Prayer-Books used in Italy, England, and the West. See on ii. 34, 35, and 36, 37. The earliest, however, of these Introits, or short anthems before the Office for Holy Communion, do not appear to have been inserted before the fifth or sixth centuries.

The purport of the book is to set forth that, on account of the rebellion and ingratitude displayed by the Jews, in spite of the many mercies they had received, the heathen who, notwithstanding their lesser advantages (i. 35, 36.), had repented and obeyed, were called in their stead to be the children of God. To those of the heathen who should hear and understand, their Shepherd would give everlasting rest (ii. 34.); and the book ends with a vision, imitated from the Revelation of St. John, of the great multitude on Mount Sion of those who were sealed, clothed in white, and praising the Lord with songs, receiving crowns from the hand of the Son of God.

b. The longer work (chaps. iii.—xiv.), to which the other portions a. (i. and ii.) and c. (xv. and xvi.) were afterwards appended, was written by a Jew, and is pervaded by a strong and exclusive Judaic temper. This is seen in the deep love which he shows towards Israel, whose prerogatives he sets forth, as the Lord's people, the Lord's inheritance, the people whom the Lord loved above all people, His firstborn and only begotten (iii. 30—36; iv. 23, 25; v. 23—28; vi. 55, 58, 59; vii. 10, 11; viii. 15, 16.); in the contempt with which he speaks of the Gentiles, and in the grief, perplexity, and indignation which he feels at the humiliation of Israel, and their present subjugation to the heathen (v. 28, 33, 35; vi. 56, 57; x. 21—23, 39, 50.). We may also bring forward in proof of the Jewish authorship of the book, the legend of Behemoth and Leviathan, kept for the feast at the coming of Messiah (vi. 49—52.); the vision of the woman who has lost her son, the emblem of the destruction that came upon Jerusalem (x. 44—47.); the story of the preservation of the ten tribes in a strange land beyond the Euphrates, and their gathering together unto Sion (xiii. 39—49); the restoration of the books of the Old Testament which had been burned, and the writing of the seventy books which were only to be delivered to the wise (xiv. 21, 46.). The coming of the Messiah, the Anointed, the Son of God, is spoken of as the time when the nations were to be punished and God's people delivered (vii. 28; xii. 32, 34; xiii. 32, 37, 52; xiv. 9.); but the Christ had not yet come.

The future life and the judgment are often referred to (iv. 35, 41;

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vii. 13, 32—35, 117 (47), 126 (56); viii. 52—54; ix. 12; xii. 34; xiv. 34, 35.); and in the long passage which has for so many years been missing from the Latin translation (vii. 36*—105*), there is a full description of the state of the righteous and wicked after death.

The writer touches on some part of the great problem, the existence of evil, and in a bold, yet reverential spirit, propounds his perplexities, and attempts their solution. Can it be thought that God made man in order that he might perish, thus destroying the work of His own hands? And yet, if not, how cometh it to pass that He has left nearly all men to be so constantly and persistently evil that few will be saved? Could He not have taken away from man this wicked heart, and so have made man less evil? Or if not, would it not have been better that man had never been made at all? Is it not better to die as the beasts die, than after death to live in misery? Is it not cruel to mock men with glorious promises of happiness in the world to come, to which one ten-thousandth part of mankind shall never attain? See on iii. 20; vii. 63*, 65*, 116—125 (46—55), 138, 140 (68, 70); viii. 1—3; ix. 22.

The book was written in Greek, and in early times was known to Christian writers, and by some received and cited as a work of the prophet Esdras. Two short fragments of the original Greek are preserved in quotations; one in the Epistle of Barnabas, which many have considered to be a work of the Apostle St. Barnabas, and another in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, who is supposed to have died about A.D. 220 (see on 4 Esdras v. 5, and 35.). It seems probable also that viii. 23 (see *Note*) is quoted in the liturgy preserved in *The Apostolical Constitutions*, which is thought to be older than the third century after Christ. It is doubtful whether St. Cyprian intends specially to refer to any passage of this book when he speaks of the world growing old, and all things becoming more feeble than they were wont to be, for this is a common sentiment which finds expression in many writers. See on v. 53—55; xiv. 10. It is, however, largely cited by St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan (who died 397, A.D.), who speaks of it as Scripture, and as inspired; and, taking it as a work of the historical Ezra, supposes it to be older than Plato, who may have taken from it (e.g. vii. 32.) the doctrine of the immortality of the soul; St. Ambrose cites Esdras, he says, in order that the heathen may see that those things which they admire in their own philosophical books were taken from the books which Christians use. See his treatise *De Bono Mortis*, xi., xii., and his first letter to Horontianus; and the *Notes* on v. 42, 50—55; vi. 41; vii. 28, 32, 36*, 40*—42*, 78*, 80*—87*, 91*—101*; x. 6—16, 20—24; xiv. 9. Many Christian writers, from the second to the fifth century, speak of the burning of the books of the Old Testament, and their restoration by Ezra, in a way which renders it at least very probable that they may be referring to 4 Esdras xiv. See *Note* on ver. 21. Vigilantius, a Christian writer, resident in Spain in the beginning of the fifth century, refers to a passage in the seventh chapter of this book as an authority against prayers for the dead. St. Jerome treats with contempt not only his argument, but his authority (see *Note* on 102*—105*); St. Jerome is the first who has spoken in disparagement of the Fourth Book of Esdras.

That the book was widely spread and highly valued is shown by

the fact that it was translated not only into Latin, but into Syriac, Æthiopic, Arabic, and Armenian. These translations have been printed, and have been translated into Latin; the Æthiopic and Arabic Versions have also been translated into English. These Oriental Versions are in many places indispensable to any one endeavouring to discover the probable reading or meaning of the lost original: even when the Latin text of the printed editions is corrected by the best of the manuscripts, there still remain passages in which, but for the help of these Versions, the true reading could not be ascertained. See, for example, on iii. 4; iv. 36; vii. 28; viii. 53; xii. 11; xiii. 3. As already noticed above, in the *General Introduction*, these versions give only the Fourth Book of Esdras itself (iii.—xiv.), which they give complete, with its own beginning and ending (see on iii. 1; xiv. 48.); which were afterwards left out when the additional chapters (i., ii., and xv., xvi.) were placed at the beginning and end of the book, in order to render it less obvious that these portions were subsequent additions. Without attempting anything like a critical examination of the text, an attempt which would be altogether foreign to the purpose of this commentary for general readers, it will be seen that in some places it has been necessary to place in the notes amendments of the corruptions which, through the printed Latin text, have found their way into our Version, in order to prevent important passages remaining unintelligible.

Our English Version, following the Latin, has one manifest interpolation, "Jesus," in vii. 28 (see *Note*), made by some Christian at an earlier period than the time of St. Ambrose; and one very large omission between vv. 35 and 36 of chap. vii. It was evident that something was omitted, on account of the abruptness and want of connection of the two ends from which the intermediate portion had been broken away. This portion, which was formerly in the Latin copies, as a considerable part of it is cited by St. Ambrose, and one passage is referred to by Vigilantius in the time of St. Jerome (see *Notes* on vv. 36*, 40*—42*, 78*, 80*—87*, 91*—101*, and on 102*—105*), is preserved to us in all the Oriental Versions, and has lately been discovered in a Latin manuscript of the ninth century, now in the Communal Library at Amiens. See on vii. 35, where the omitted passage is brought back to its proper place.

Of the place where the book was written nothing is known; some have conjectured Alexandria in Egypt.

It is also very difficult to decide at what period it was written. It purports to be written in the name of Esdras; but the writer can hardly have meant to personate the historical Esdras, who, many years after the Temple had been rebuilt, went up from Babylon to Jerusalem with costly gifts bestowed by the favour of the Persian king, and took part with Nehemiah in the dedication festival, after the rebuilding of the walls of the city (Ezra vii. Neh. xii. 36.). The historical Esdras beholds the religious and political restoration of Israel: the Esdras of this book is represented as living in Babylon thirty years after the desolation of Sion, at a time when the Temple was destroyed, the city burned, and the people suffering great calamities (iii. 1, 2, 29; v. 35; x. 7, 20—23; xii. 44, 48.). The events of the book take place far away from Jerusalem (e.g. v. 16, 17.), and as soon as Esdras had finished the re-writing of the books of the

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Scripture which had been burned, he is taken up into heaven to dwell with the Son of God (xiv. 9, 48.). There is, moreover, not only an entire absence of any reference to the prophecies of the restoration of the children of Judah to their own land, but the world is represented as waxing old, and the end of all things drawing near (iv. 26; v. 50; xiv. 9—17.); sentiments singularly inappropriate to be placed in the mouth of one who, like the historical Esdras, was known to have lived some centuries before this book was published. The "Salathiel, who is also Esdras" (see *Note* on iii. 1.), in whose name the book is written, would appear therefore to be a personage mythical and imaginary, who, through the likeness of name, became confused with the historical Esdras; a confusion which became almost inevitable at a later period, when the "Second Book of Esdras," a. (chaps. i., ii.), was written as in the name of Ezra, and prefixed to this "Fourth Book of Esdras" as if it were an integral part of the same work. The elaborate account of the rulers of the Fourth Kingdom, i.e. the Roman Empire, given in xi., xii., would seem to afford ample materials for fixing the date of the book, but it will be seen (see on xi. 1.) that it is very difficult to arrive at any clear interpretation of the persons and events referred to. According to some interpretations given of the wings and heads of the eagle, as described in these chapters, the Fourth Book of Esdras could not have been written till the latter part of the century after Christ, some years after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, A.D. 70. The whole tone of the book falls in very well with this period, in its mournfulness, its representation of the completeness of the desolation of Sion, its expectation that the world is soon coming to an end. See iv. 23—25, 26, *Note*; v. 28, 33, 35; vi. 57; x. 20—23. If this late date be assumed as not altogether improbable, the writer could hardly have been ignorant of the rise and progress of Christianity, and thus we may account for the frequent resemblances between passages in this book and portions of the New Testament (e.g. iv. 26, 30, 35, 36; vi. 20, 23; vii. 32, 33, 127, 128 (57, 58.); viii. 1, 3, 52; ix. 3.). Even if the writer had not seen Christian books, he may by conversation with Christians have caught some of their expressions and thoughts.

It may, however, be urged that a book written at this late date could hardly have gained sufficient authority to be quoted by so early a writer as Barnabas. The Epistle of Barnabas, even if not accepted as a genuine letter of the Apostle, was written in the early part of the second century after Christ (with respect, however, to the quotation in the Epistle of Barnabas, see *Note* on v. 5.). If this objection to this late date is felt to be strong enough to make us look for an earlier date, the most probable is to be found in the latter part of the century before Christ, soon after the death of Julius Cæsar, B.C. 44. See on xii. 26, 29, 30. If this earlier date could be sustained it would make the book of much interest, as throwing light on Jewish modes of thought, and the expectations entertained concerning the Messiah in the period immediately preceding the birth of our Lord. Questions, too, of some importance might arise with reference to the similarity between passages of this book and the New Testament; but such questions may be left for the present until something more approaching to certainty has been determined respecting the time when the book first made its appearance.

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The book may be divided into eight portions:—

I. (iii.). The first chapter serves as an introduction to the rest. Salathiel, who is also Esdras, in great tribulation on account of the desolation of Zion, prayeth unto God, confessing the sin of his people (vv. 25, 26.), yet making bold to complain that God had given Israel into the hands of the heathen, who were even more wicked (vv. 28, 31.) than they.

II. The First Vision (iv. 1—v. 19.). The angel Uriel cometh to comfort Esdras, and to instruct him concerning things to come. Having reproved Esdras for being too hasty in judging of the ways of the Most High, the angel telleth him that the greater part of the world's age hath passed away (iv. 50.), and recounteth some of the signs of the drawing near of the end.

III. The Second Vision (v. 20—vi. 34.). The angel, appearing again to Esdras, justifieth the hidden wisdom and orderly course of God's rule over the world, which at His will was created, and at His will shall end. This end is nigh at hand, for the world is waxing old, and hasteneth to grow feeble; and the days are coming when God will draw near in visitation and judgment, when the books shall be opened (v. 50; vi. 18—20, 23.), and the trumpet shall sound; when evil and deceit shall be put out, and truth and faith shall flourish.

IV. The Third Vision (vi. 35—ix. 25.). The longest of all: the vision of judgment; the seven woes of the lost; the seven joys of the just; the fewness of the saved. God's justice is vindicated in punishing the multitude of men, because they have sinned; and Esdras is rebuked, for thinking to show himself more merciful than God by sorrowing over those that perish (viii. 47.).

V. The Fourth Vision (ix. 26—x.). The vision of the woman who appeared mourning for her lost son, and was transformed into a city. The present desolation and the future glory of Zion.

VI. The Fifth Vision (xi., xii.). The vision of the eagle and the lion. The disappearance of the kingdom that had dominion over the world (the Roman Empire), and the coming of the judgment of the Christ.

VII. The Sixth Vision (xiii.). The vision of the man that rose out of the sea. The Son of God, who destroyeth by the breath of His mouth the multitude of the nations assembled to war against Him, and who gathereth from the unknown land beyond Euphrates the long hidden ten tribes of Israel unto Zion.

VIII. (xiv.). The restoration of the Scriptures which had been burned, and the writing of the seventy secret books, which were to be shown only unto the wise.

After these things Esdras is taken up into heaven.

c. This work, which is printed as 2 Esdr. xv., xvi., is a distinct book in itself, having no connection with the revelations and visions of the preceding book. It is only found in the Latin, and in many manuscripts is reckoned as the Fifth Book of Esdras, though it does not, like the two preceding books (*a.* and *b.*), profess to be written by Esdras, whose name, indeed, does not occur in it.

INTRODUCTION.

The book consists of denunciations of God's wrath upon the wicked, and prophecies of woe to come upon Egypt, Babylon, Asia, and Syria. It foretells great persecution, which should be upon them that fear the Lord (xv. 10; xvi. 70—74.); and bids them be as pilgrims in a world which was too troubled for them to enjoy, and warns them against being partakers in the iniquity prevailing around (xvi. 40, 46, 51, 67.). It comforts and encourages God's servants with the promise of speedy deliverance (xvi. 52.); and exhorts them not to be afraid nor doubt, in that these troubles, like the fire trying the gold (xvi. 73.), should make it known who were His chosen.

There are many places which may be thought to resemble passages in the New Testament (see, for instance, on xv. 2, 8, 14, 35, 50; xvi. 41—44, 52, 53, 66.); and the book would seem to have been written by a Christian in some season of war, tumult, and persecution, in the middle of the third century after Christ. See more in detail in the *Notes* at the beginning of chap. xv.

With the exception of one sentence (see on xvi. 59.), which may possibly be quoted by St. Ambrose (333—397, A.D.), the only quotations of this book by ancient writers which have as yet been pointed out, are by the British writer Gildas, in the sixth century, who cites two passages, and applies them to the troublous circumstances of his own times. See on xv. 21; xvi. 3.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, I.

CHAPTER I.

¹ *Esdras is commanded to reprove the people. 24 God threateneth to cast them off, 35 and to give their houses to a people of more grace than they.*

^a Ezra 7. 1.

² Or,
Shallum.

THE second book of the prophet ^a Esdras, the son of Saraias, the son of Azarias, the son of Helchias, the son of ² Sadamias, the son of Sadoc, the son of Achitob,

2 the son of Achias, the son of Phinees, the son of Heli, the son of Amarias, the son of Aziei, the son of Marimoth, the son of Arna, the son of Ozias, the son of Borith, the son of Abisei, the son of Phinees, the son of Eleazar,

3 the son of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi; which was captive in the land of the Medes, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of the Persians.

CHAPTER I.

1. "The prophet Esdras." Esdras is called "the prophet," because he was supposed to have prophesied of Christ, who is The Truth (see St. Augustine, in the *Note* on 1 Esdr. iv. 38—40.). This writer, putting forth his book as a "Second Book" of Esdras, adopts the title which he found that many Christians of his day had given to Esdras. Compare also 4 Esdras xii. 42. The "first book of Esdras" would be Ezra and Nehemiah. "Esdras;" ii. 10, 33, 42. See also on iii. 1.

1, 2. These names afford one of the many examples which may be found of the way in which names become corrupted in transcription. Thus, Arna represents the name which appears as Zarahias, 1 Esdr. viii. 2 (Zerahiah, Ezra vii. 4. 1 Chr. vi. 6.); and Borith is found written Boccas, 1 Esdr. viii. 2 (Bukki, Ezra vii. 4. 1 Chr. vi. 5.). The genealogy here follows that in 1 Esdr. viii. and Ezra vii., omitting six names, given in 1 Chr. vi. 7—9, between Aziei (Ezias, 1 Esdr. viii. 2; Azariah, 1 Chr. vi. 9.) and Marimoth. Three names, Achias, Phinees, and Heli, are inserted here between Achitob and Amarias: these names seem to have been taken by mistake from the genealogy of the other branch, that of Eli, in 1 Sam. xiv. 3.

3. "Which was captive in the land of the Medes." If the writer, by speaking afterwards of "Artaxerxes King of the Persians," intended to intimate that "the land of the Medes" was to be taken in its more strict and local sense, this expression can hardly be said to be quite accurate, as Ezra came up from Babylon (Ezra vii. 6.). On the destruction of Samaria by the King of Assyria, the captives were placed in certain "cities of the Medes" (2 Kin. xvii. 6; xviii. 11.), which would imply the subjection of Media to Assyria at that time; but this was many years before the carrying away of Judah into Babylon. When the Persians conquered the Babylonians, the Medes, though subject since the time of Cyrus to the Persians, yet as a kindred race are often spoken of as if on an equality with the Persians (see, for instance, Esth. i. 3, 14, 18, 19; x. 2. Jer. li. 11. Dan. v. 28, 31; vi. 8, 12.);

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, I.

4 And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

5 Go thy way, and ^b shew my people their sinful ^b Is. 58. 1. deeds, and their children their wickedness which they have done against me; that they may tell their children's children:

6 because the sins of their fathers are increased in them: for they have forgotten me, and have offered unto strange gods.

7 Am not I even he that brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage? but they have provoked me unto wrath, and despised my counsels.

8 Pull thou off then the hair of thy head, and cast all evil upon them, for they have not been obedient unto my law, but it is a rebellious people.

9 How long shall I forbear them, unto whom I have done so much good?

10 Many kings have I destroyed for their sakes;

so that we may suppose that the writer may have intended to use "land of the Medes" in a loose way to describe any portion of the territories now subject to the conquering race ("the Medes and Persians"), who had succeeded to the dominion of the Babylonians.

4—37. The Message which Esdras is sent to deliver to the Children of Israel, reproving their Ingratitude and Disobedience, and announcing their Rejection. The Call of the Gentiles.

5. Compare Is. lviii. 1, "Show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

6. "They have forgotten me," ver. 14. Compare Jer. ii. 32; xiii. 25; xviii. 15. Ezek. xxii. 12; xxiii. 35; and such passages as Deut. xxxii. 18. Judg. iii. 7. Ps. cvi. 21. Hos. viii. 14.

"Have offered unto strange gods." Compare Jer. iii. 13; v. 19; vii. 9, 18. Hos. iii. 1.

7. Compare Mic. vi. 3, 4.

8. "Pull thou off then the hair of thy head." As a sign of grief and indignation. Compare Ezra ix. 3, *Note*. Esth. xiv. 2.

"Cast all evil upon them." Compare a similar form of expression in Jer. i. 10, where the prophet is said to be set himself to do that which he is commissioned to foretell. Compare also Hos. vi. 5.

"A rebellious people." Compare Ezek. ii. 3, 5, 7.

9. "How long shall I forbear them." Compare St. Matt. xvii. 17.

10. "Many kings have I destroyed before them." Compare Ps. lxviii. 12, 14; cxxxv. 10; cxxxvi. 17, 18.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, I.

^c Ex. 14. 28. ^c Pharaoh with his servants and all his power have I smitten down.

^d Num. 21. 24. 11 ^d All the nations have I destroyed before them, and in the east I have scattered the people of two provinces, even of Tyrus and Sidon, and have slain all their enemies.

12 Speak thou therefore unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord,

^e Ex. 14. 29. 13 ^e I led you through the sea, and in the beginning gave you a large and safe ² passage; ^f I gave you Moses for a leader, and Aaron for a priest.

^g Ex. 13. 21. 14 ^g I gave you light in a pillar of fire, and great wonders have I done among you; yet have ye forgotten me, saith the Lord.

^h Ex. 16. 13. Ps. 105. 40. 15 Thus saith the Almighty Lord, The ^h quails were as a token to you; I gave you tents for your safeguard: nevertheless ye murmured there,

11. "In the east I have scattered the people of two provinces, **"even of Tyrus and Sidon."** As the writer speaks of Tyre and Sidon as being "in the East," we may not improbably infer that he was writing in the West; possibly at Rome. In the uncertainty respecting the date of 2 Esdras, it is not easy to point out with any certainty the particular calamities to which the writer may be here supposed to be referring. Tyre was captured and plundered by Alexander the Great, B.C. 332, and Sidon by Artaxerxes Ochus, B.C. 351; but these periods of calamity are later than the time of Ezra, in whose name the author writes. Tyre and Sidon were not long in recovering their prosperity, and were flourishing and important cities in the time of Augustus, and during the period of our Lord's life; and in the fifth century, St. Jerome speaks of Tyre as the most noble and beautiful city in Phœnicia. Probably the writer, familiar with the prophetic denunciations of Isaiah (xxiii.) and Ezekiel (xxvi.—xxviii.), intends to speak only in a general indefinite way, when he thus joins Tyre and Sidon with Egypt, the old oppressor of Israel. He may have remembered also that Tyre and Sidon are joined together in the Gospels, as examples of places eminent in wickedness (St. Matt. xi. 21, 22. St. Luke x. 13, 14.).

13. "In the beginning." Read rather, with the oldest manuscript, "where there was no way." Compare Is. li. 10, "that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over;" xliiii. 16; lxiii. 13.

"I gave you Moses . . . and Aaron." Compare Mic. vi. 4.

14. "Ye have forgotten me." See on ver. 6.

15. "Thus saith the Almighty Lord." So again, vv. 22, 28, 33; ii. 9, 31.

"I gave you tents" (Latin, "camps") "for your safeguard." It is not clear what the writer intends by this: the allusion, however,

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, I.

16 and triumphed not in my name for the destruction of your enemies, but ever to this day do ye yet murmur.

17 Where are the benefits that I have done for you? when ye were hungry and thirsty in the wilderness, ¹did ye not cry unto me,

¹ Num. 14. 3.

18 saying, Why hast thou brought us into this wilderness to kill us? it had been better for us to have served the Egyptians, than to die in this wilderness.

19 Then had I pity upon your mournings, and gave you manna to eat; ^kso ye did eat angels' bread.

^k Wisd. 16. 20.

20 ¹When ye were thirsty, did I not cleave the rock, and waters flowed out ²to your fill? for the heat I covered you with the leaves of the trees.

¹ Num. 20. 11.
² Wisd. 11. 4.
² Or,
abundantly.

21 I divided among you a fruitful land, I cast out the Canaanites, the Pherezites, and the Philistines,

seems to be to such places as Num. ix. 15—23; x. 35, 36, which relate how the camping places of the children of Israel in the wilderness, the period of their staying in them, and the time of their removing from them, were under the direction of God, who gave them the assurance of His presence and protection by the visible symbol of the cloud (Compare Deut. i. 32, 33, "the Lord your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in," &c.).

"Nevertheless ye murmured there." Compare Ps. cvi. 16, 25.

16. "Triumphed not in my name." Compare the Prayer-Book version of Ps. xx. 5, "we will . . . triumph in the name of the Lord our God."

"Unto this day." Compare Deut. ix. 7. 1 Sam. viii. 8. 2 Kin. xxi. 15. Jer. xlv. 10.

18. "It had been better for us to have served the Egyptians." The words are from Ex. xiv. 12. See also Num. xiv. 2, 3.

19. "Angels' bread," Ps. lxxviii. 25. Wisd. xvi. 20. Compare St. John vi. 31.

20. "For the heat I covered you with the leaves of trees." This additional mark of the Divine protection seems to have been supplied from the imagination of the writer, who may have had in his recollection, and transferred to the times of the wanderings of the Israelites, the imagery of the passage in Bar. v. 8, "Moreover even the woods and every sweet-smelling tree shall overshadow Israel by the commandment of God." The writer refers to and cites several places of Baruch in chap. ii. See vv. 2—4.

21. "I cast out the Canaanites, the Pherezites." See also Gen. xiii. 7; xxxiv. 30. Judg. i. 4, 5, where these two names are given as representing the old inhabitants of the land.

"I cast out . . . Philistines before you." The Philistines, in the stricter sense of the word, were not driven out before the Israelites, but retained their independence and waged with varying fortune constant

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, I.

^m Isai. 5. 4. before you : ^m what shall I yet do more for you? saith the Lord.

22 Thus saith the Almighty Lord, When ye were in the wilderness, ² in the river of the Amorites, being athirst, and blaspheming my name,

² Or, at the bitter waters, or, waters of Marah, Ex. 15. 23, 25.

23 I gave you not fire for your blasphemies, but cast a tree in the water, and made the river sweet.

24 What shall I do unto thee, O Jacob? thou, ⁿ Ex. 32. 8. ⁿ Juda, wouldest not obey me : I will turn me to other nations, and unto those will I give my name, that they may keep my statutes.

wars with the children of Judah until the time of the Captivity: the prophets of that period denounce heavy calamities against them (Jer. xlvii. Ezek. xxv. 15—17.). After the return from the Captivity, the Jews married women of the Philistines, as well as women of Moab and Ammon, till Nehemiah took measures to stop these marriages (xiii. 23.). Philistia, with the rest of Palestine, fell eventually under the dominion of the Romans. If we suppose that the writer uses "Philistines" as a general term to denote the other inhabitants of the land, which from them was named "Palestine," we might, instead of "Philistines," render the word "inhabitants of Palestine." It may be observed that, though our words Philistia (Ps. lx. 8; lxxxvii. 4; cviii. 9.) and Palestine (Exod. xv. 14. Is. xiv. 29, 31. Joel iii. 4.) differ somewhat from each other, they represent one and the same word in the Hebrew. The Greeks also use the same word, whether they mean to speak of Palestine Proper, the narrow strip by the sea coast where the "Philistines" dwelt, or to employ the word in a wider sense. When Josephus is speaking of the people we more usually now call "Philistines," he calls their country Palestine. Among English writers, Milton more than once uses Palestine to denote the land of the "Philistines."

"What shall I yet do more for you?" Compare Is. v. 4.

22. "In the wilderness, in the river of the Amorites." The waters of Marah (see *Margin*) are generally supposed to be those of the spring of brackish water now called Ain Howwa'rah, three days' journey from Suez. The Amorites were one of the races driven out before the face of the children of Israel, and apparently one of the most powerful of those races, as their name is not unfrequently used in a general way to denote the earlier inhabitants of the land (Gen. xv. 16; xlviii. 22. Deut. i. 7, 19, 20, 27. 1 Kin. xxi. 26. 2 Kin. xxi. 11. Amos ii. 9, 10.). The writer here seems to use "Amorites" in an indefinite way, to denote any of the strange and hostile tribes of the "wilderness" through which the Israelites journeyed from Egypt to the promised land.

23. "Cast a tree into the water." Exod. xv. 25. Ecclus. xxxviii. 5, "Was not the water made sweet with wood, that the virtue thereof might 'be known?'"

24. "I will turn me unto other nations." Compare Acts xiii. 46, "lo, we turn to the Gentiles;" xviii. 6; xxviii. 28. The writer may, perhaps, have had these passages in his mind. We have here intimated the call of the Gentiles, and in ver. 25 the rejection of Israel. See also vv. 35—37; and ii. 10, 11, 33, 34. Contrast with this the strong Jewish

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, I.

25 Seeing ye have forsaken me, I will forsake you also; when ye desire me to be gracious unto you, I shall have no mercy upon you.

26 ° Whensoever ye shall call upon me, I will not ^{° Isai. 1. 15.} hear you: for ye have defiled your hands with blood, and your feet are swift to commit manslaughter.

27 Ye have not as it were forsaken me, but your own selves, saith the Lord.

28 Thus saith the Almighty Lord, Have I not prayed you as a father his sons, as a mother her daughters, and a nurse her young babes,

29 that ye would be my people, ^{2 Or, as I am your God.} and I should be your God; that ye would be my children, and I should be your father?

30 ^P I gathered you together, as a hen gathereth ^{P Matt. 23. 37.} her chickens under her wings: but now, what shall I do unto you? I will cast you out from my face.

sentiments, and the contempt for the Gentiles expressed in the other work which follows this, also written in the name of "Esdras." See 4 Esdr. iii. 35, 36; v. 23—30, 35; vi. 55—59; viii. 15, 16.

"Unto those will I give my name." Compare Num. vi. 27, "they shall put my name upon the children of Israel." It was one of the special prerogatives of Israel, that the name of the Lord God of Israel was called upon them, or, as the words are sometimes rendered, that they were "called by the name" of the Lord. Compare 1 Esdr. vi. 1. Deut. xxviii. 10. 2 Chr. vii. 14. Is. lxiii. 19; lxv. 1. Jer. xiv. 9; xv. 16. Dan. ix. 18, 19. Amos ix. 12. This mark of God's love and favour was now to be transferred to the Gentiles (compare Acts xv. 17; and see below, ii. 16.). Contrast 4 Esdr. iv. 25, "What will He then do "unto His name whereby we are called?"

25. "Seeing ye have forsaken me, I will forsake you also." Taken from 2 Chr. xv. 2; xxiv. 20. Compare Josh. xxiv. 20. Deut. xxix. 24, 28; xxxi. 17, 18. "I will forsake you," Jer. xxiii. 39.

26. "Whensoever ye shall call . . . I will not hear you;" Is. i. 15; lix. 2. Prov. i. 28.

"Ye have defiled your hands with blood." From Is. i. 15; lix. 3.

"Your feet are swift to commit manslaughter;" Is. lix. 7. Prov. i. 16. Rom. iii. 15.

28. "As a nurse." Compare 1 Thess. ii. 7.

29. "That ye would be my people, and I should be your God." Compare the promises so often found in the Prophets, Jer. xxiv. 7; xxx. 22; xxxi. 1, 33; xxxii. 38. Ezek. xi. 20; xiv. 11; xxxvi. 28; xxxvii. 27. Hos. ii. 23. Zech. viii. 8; xiii. 9; and Rom. ix. 26. Heb. viii. 10. Bar. ii. 35.

"My children;" Hos. i. 10.

30. "As a hen gathereth her chickens." See St. Matt. xxiii. 37.

"I will cast you out from my face;" ver. 33. Compare 1 Kin. ix. 7. Jer. vii. 15; xxiii. 39.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, I.

^q Isai. i. 13,
14.

31 ^a When ye offer unto me, I will turn my face from you: for your solemn feastsdays, your new moons, and your circumcisions, have I forsaken.

32 I sent unto you my servants the prophets, whom ye have taken and slain, and torn their bodies in pieces, whose blood I will require of your hands, saith the Lord.

^r Matt. 23. 38.
Luke 13. 35.

33 Thus saith the Almighty Lord, ^r Your house is desolate, I will cast you out as the wind doth stubble.

34 And your children shall not be fruitful; for they have despised my commandment, and done the thing that is evil before me.

35 Your houses will I give to a people that shall come; which not having heard of me yet shall believe me; to whom I have shewed no signs, yet they shall do that I have commanded them.

36 They have seen no prophets, yet they shall call their sins to remembrance, and acknowledge them.

37 I take to witness the grace of the people to

31. See Is. i. 13, 14.

32. "I sent . . . my servants the prophets." Compare ii. 1; and Jer. vii. 25; xxv. 4; xxvi. 5; xxxv. 15; xlv. 4. See St. Matt. xxiii. 34.

"Whom ye have taken and slain." Compare Neh. ix. 26.

"Torn their bodies in pieces." "Were sawn asunder." Heb. xi. 37. There was a tradition, referred to by some early Christian writers, that Isaiah was sawn asunder.

"Whose blood I will require of your hands." Compare St. Matt. xxiii. 35, 36. St. Luke xi. 50, 51.

33. "Your house is desolate." From St. Matt. xxiii. 38.

"I will cast you out" (ver. 30.) "as the wind doth stubble." Compare Job xxi. 18. Ps. i. 4; xxxv. 5; lxxxiii. 13. Is. xl. 24.

34. "Your children shall not be fruitful." Fruitfulness was one of the promises of the Law (Lev. xxvi. 9. Deut. vii. 13, 14; xxviii. 4, 11.); while "cursed shall be the fruit of thy body" (Deut. xxviii. 18.), was the denunciation, if Israel did not hearken unto the voice of the Lord.

"They have despised my commandment." Compare Lev. xxvi. 15, 43. Prov. i. 30. Is. v. 24. Amos ii. 4, and 4 Esdr. vii. 24.

35. "A people . . . which not having heard of me shall obey me." See Is. lii. 15; lv. 5. Rom. xv. 21. Ps. xviii. 43, 44.

35—37. "A people that shall come." The Church gathered out from the Gentiles (ii. 10.). Compare Ps. xxii. 31.

36. "Sins" is an emendation of the Latin printed text (Vulgate). The original reading was, apparently, a word which we may render "old customs,"—"They shall remember and forsake their old heathen customs and ancestral idolatries."

"They shall call . . . to remembrance." Cp. Ezek. xx. 43; xxxvi. 31.

37. "The people to come." See ver. 38.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, I.

come, whose little ones rejoice in gladness: and
"though they have not seen me with bodily eyes, yet ^{*John. 20. 29.}
in spirit they believe the thing that I say.

38 And now, brother, behold what glory; and see
the people that come from the east:

39 unto whom I will give for leaders, Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob, Oseas, Amos, and Micheas, Joel,
Abdias, and Jonas,

40 Nahum, and Abacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Za-
chary, and Malachy, which is called also an ^{*Mal. 3. 1.} angel
of the Lord.

"Though they have not seen me with bodily eyes." Compare St.
John xx. 29. 1 Pet. i. 8.

38—40. Esdras is bidden to behold the coming in of the Gentiles.

38. "See the people that come." Compare Is. xlix. 18; lx. 4.
This verse seems an imitation of Bar. iv. 36, 37, "O Jerusalem, look
"about thee toward the East, and behold the joy that cometh unto
"thee from God. Lo, thy sons come," &c. Compare also Bar. v. 5, 6,
and Is. xliii. 5, 6; xlix. 12. Zech. viii. 7, and St. Matt. viii. 11. St.
Luke xiii. 29. Here the writer seems most impressed by the coming
in of the converts from the East. Some have thought, though the in-
ference is very doubtful, that in thus speaking only of the East, and omit-
ting to make any mention of the West, they could see some ground for
conjecturing that the author was writing in the West.

"And now, brother." Assuming that "brother" be the true reading,
which is very uncertain, there is some difficulty in supposing that God
would thus address His servant the prophet; and yet it is but natural to
infer that a writer under the name of Ezra would intend to introduce
God the Father as speaking here. In ii. 5, however, we seem to find the
Son brought in as addressing the Father; and it may perhaps be that the
Son is supposed to be speaking now. In that case, for "brother" com-
pare St. John xx. 17. Rom. viii. 29. Heb. ii. 11, 12.

39, 40. Under a different form of expression, these verses convey the
same general meaning as Rom. ii. 29; ix. 7. Gal. iii. 29. Phil. iii. 3,
that the Gentiles, by becoming Christians, became Abraham's true seed,
and heirs according to the promise. To those who were not the seed
according to the flesh, were transferred the prerogatives and preeminence
of Israel; and the Gentiles henceforth were reckoned as "the children
"of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers"
(Acts iii. 25.).

39. The first six minor prophets are given, not in the order in which they
stand in the Hebrew Bibles, but as they are placed in the Greek transla-
tion (LXX.), made some two centuries and more after the death of Ezra.

39, 40. "Abdias," . . . "Sophonias." These names we write in our
Bibles, "Obadiah" and "Zephaniah."

40. "Malachy, which is called also an angel of the Lord." The
name Malachi signifies, my messenger, or angel.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, II.

CHAPTER II.

1 *God complaineth of his people: 10 yet Esdras is willed to comfort them. 34 Because they refused, the Gentiles are called. 43 Esdras seeth the Son of God, and those that are crowned by him.*

THUS saith the Lord, I brought this people out of bondage, and I gave them my commandments by my servants the prophets; whom they would not hear, but despised my counsels.

2 The mother that bare them saith unto them, Go your way, ye children; for I am a widow and forsaken.

3 I brought you up with gladness; but with sorrow and heaviness have I lost you: for ye have sinned before the Lord your God, and done that thing that is evil before him.

4 But what shall I now do unto you? I am a widow and forsaken: go your way, O my children, and ask mercy of the Lord.

5 As for me, O father, I call upon thee for a wit-

CHAPTER II.

The Rejection of Israel for their Ingratitude and Rebellion.

1. "My prophets; whom they would not hear." Compare i. 32.

2—4. This passage is an imitation of, and some parts of it are quotations from, Bar. iv. 10—21.

"The mother that bare them . . . O my children" (ver. 2, 4, 5.). "Mother:" Judea and her inhabitants, with special reference to Jerusalem, the chosen home of the national life and religion (see Bar. iv. 8—37; v. 5. Ps. cxlvii. 13. Lam. i. 5, 16. Hos. ii. 2, 4, 5. St. Luke xix. 44.). Compare also, for a similar figure applied to the spiritual Jerusalem, the Christian Church, vv. 15, 17, 25, 30, 31, 41. Is. xlix. 20, 21. Gal. iv. 26.

"Go your way, ye children; for I am . . . forsaken." From Bar. iv. 19.

2, 4. "A widow and forsaken." Bar. iv. 12, "Let no man rejoice over me, a widow, and forsaken of many, who for the sins of my children am left desolate." "A widow" (Lam. i. 1.). The prophet Isaiah personifies Babylon as boasting, "I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children." See Is. xlvii. 8, 9. Rev. xviii. 7; and below, xv. 49 (5 Esdr.).

3. "I brought you up with gladness; but with sorrow and heaviness have I lost you" (Bar. iv. 11.). Compare Jer. xxxi. 15.

4. "But what shall I now do unto you? . . . ask mercy of the Lord" (Bar. iv. 17, 21.). The first words of ver. 21 are omitted, as not suited to the tone and purport of the present passage.

5. "As for me, O father, I call upon thee." These words would seem to show that the writer is introducing the Son of God as the speaker (compare on i. 38.).

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, II.

ness over the mother of these children, which would not keep my covenant,

6 that thou bring them to confusion, and their mother to a spoil, that there may be no offspring of them.

7 Let them be scattered abroad among the heathen, let their names be put out of the earth: for they have despised my ² covenant.

² Or, sacrament, or, oath.

8 Woe be unto thee, Assur, thou that hidest the unrighteous in thee! O thou wicked people, remember ^a what I did unto Sodom and Gomorrhæ;

^a Gen. 19. 24.

9 whose land lieth in clods of pitch and heaps of ashes: even so also will I do unto them that hear me not, saith the Almighty Lord.

“The mother . . . these children.” See vv. 2—4.

“My covenant.” If we take this verse as spoken in the person of the Son, “my” covenant would seem to show that the writer held the opinion, shared by many other early Christian writers, that the “Angel of the Lord” who appeared to the Patriarchs (compare Gen. xix. 24; xxxi. 11, 13; xxxii. 24, 28.), who revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush (Exod. iii. 2.), who was present with the Israelites in their wanderings (Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. 1 Cor. x. 4, 9.), who was with Joshua at Jericho as the Captain of the Lord’s host (v. 14, 15; vi. 2.), was none other than the Word or Son of God. So that the old covenant given through Moses would be His, as well as the new covenant given by Himself.

7. “Let their names be put out.” Compare Deut. ix. 14; xxix. 20. Ps. ix. 5; cix. 13, 15. Exod. xvii. 14. Esth. x. 8.

8. “Woe be unto thee, Assur, thou that hidest the unrighteous in thee!” The meaning appears to be, that woe is threatened to Assur (Assyria) because it holds within its borders, and, so to speak, seems to hide from the wrath of God, the unrighteous nation the Jews, whose iniquities were so great that they would involve in the punishment brought down upon them, the people among whom they dwelt. “Assur:” The children of Israel were carried away captive into Assyria, and placed in some of the “cities of the Medes” (2 Kin. xvii. 6, 23; xviii. 11.). Judah was carried away into Babylon. Assyria here seems used to denote any of the territories over which the Assyrians had formerly exercised dominion. Thus Herodotus (i. 178.), relating the conquests of Cyrus, speaks of Babylon as part of Assyria. Compare 2 Kin. xvii. 24. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11.

Contrast with this verse 4 Esdr. xiii. 39—47, where the children of Israel are represented as the special objects of Divine favour and miraculous interference. The ten tribes, having crossed Euphrates into the land Arsareth, are preserved until the time when, recrossing the river, they are gathered unto the Son in peace on Mount Zion.

9. Compare Deut. xxix. 23. Zeph. ii. 9. “Ashes,” compare 2 Pet. ii. 6.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, II.

10 Thus saith the Lord unto Esdras, Tell my people that I will give them the kingdom of Jerusalem, which I would have given unto Israel.

11 Their glory also will I take unto me, and give these ^b the everlasting tabernacles, which I had prepared for them.

12 They shall have ^c the tree of life for an ointment of sweet savour; they shall neither labour, nor be weary.

13 Go, and ye shall receive: pray for few days unto you, that they may be shortened: ^d the kingdom is already prepared for you: ^e watch.

14 Take heaven and earth to witness; for I have broken the evil in pieces, and created the good: for I live, saith the Lord.

15 Mother, embrace thy children, and ² bring them up with gladness, make their feet as fast as a pillar: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord.

10—32. The Message of Comfort, which Esdras is sent to speak unto the People whom God hath chosen for His own instead of Israel.

10. Compare St. Matt. xxi. 43, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." See also *Note* on i. 24.

"My people;" i. 35, 38. The Christian Church, gathered out of the heathen, ver. 34. Compare the application which St. Paul (Rom. ix. 25, 26.) makes of Hos. i. 10; ii. 23: "I will call them my people, which were not my people."

11. "The everlasting tabernacles." The words of St. Luke xvi. 9, from which place perhaps they are borrowed.

12. "The tree of life." Compare Rev. ii. 7; xxii. 2, 14.

"They shall neither labour, nor be weary." Compare Rev. xxi. 4. Is. lxxv. 18, 19.

13. "Pray for few days unto you." "Thy kingdom come;" Compare Rev. xxii. 20.

"That they may be shortened." Compare St. Matt. xxiv. 22.

"Kingdom prepared." Compare St. Matt. xxv. 34. St. Mark x. 40.

"Watch." St. Mark xiii. 37.

14. "Take heaven and earth to witness." Deut iv. 26; xxx. 19; xxxi. 28. Is. i. 2.

15. "Mother . . . children;" vv. 17, 30, 31, 41. Compare Is. xlix. 20, 21. Gal. iv. 26. For the metaphor, compare also vv. 2, 4, 5; and Bar. iv. 10, 12, 14, 16, 19, 21, 25, 27.

"Bring them up with gladness." Compare Bar. iv. 23, 24, 37; v. 7, 9. Is. xxxv. 10.

"Make their feet as fast as a pillar." "Pillar" is a guess of the English translators; the printed copies of the Latin, as well as the manu-

² Or, bring them up with gladness, as a dove make their feet fast: for, &c.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, II.

16 And those that be dead will I raise up again from their places, and bring them out of the graves: for I have known ²my name in Israel.

² Or, *thy name, O Israel.*

17 Fear not, thou mother of the children: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord.

18 For thy help will I send my servants Esay and Jeremy, after whose counsel I have sanctified

scripts, read "dove." No change of any word should be made, but the punctuation should be altered, and the verse read thus, "Mother, embrace thy children; bring them up with gladness as a dove: make their feet fast, for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord." The dove is not an unfitting emblem of the Church; and there may be an allusion here to Is. lx. 8. God has not disdained to use the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit (St. Matt. iii. 16.); and the allegorical interpreters of the Song of Songs would understand that by the dove (Cant. ii. 14; vi. 9.) is prefigured the Church of Christ.

"Make their feet fast . . . for I have chosen thee." God's election of His Church is given as the reason why the feet of her children are to be set fast in firm confidence and steady endurance, to walk without slipping or stumbling in the path of duty. "Make their feet fast" (ver. 25. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 13, "Stand fast in the faith." See also such passages as 1 Sam. ii. 9. Ps. cxxi. 3. Prov. iii. 23, 26; iv. 26.). "I have chosen thee," ver. 17. Compare Deut. vii. 6. Is. xli. 8, 9; xlv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

16. Compare ver. 31. Is. xxvi. 19. Ezek. xxxvii. 12, 13.

"For I have known my name in Israel." Our translators were puzzled, as they well might be, by the reading of the printed copies, "in Israel." They have placed a guess in the *Margin*, by which, following out the spirit of such passages as Rom. ii. 29. Gal. iii. 29; vi. 16. Phil. iii. 3, they would intimate that "Israel" is to be used as an appellation of the Christian Church. This, however, can hardly be considered a fortunate guess, as "Israel" is, in vv. 10 and 33, employed to denote the Jews who were rejected for their sins. The difficulty disappears when the true reading, "in them," that is, in the Gentiles,—the reading of the manuscripts,—is restored, "I have known my name in them." God promises to raise the dead out of their graves, from respect to His own great name, which He recognises as called upon them (Acts xv. 17.), or by which they were called. It is often noted as a special mark of God's favour, and is pleaded as a reason why God should show mercy upon His people, that they are called by His name. See i. 24, and the places there referred to.

17. "Fear not." Compare Is. xliii. 1; xlv. 2.

"Mother . . . children;" vv. 15, 30.

"I have chosen thee;" ver. 15.

18. "I will send my servants Esay and Jeremy." The Jews in our Lord's time thought it possible that "Jeremiah, or one of the prophets," might appear again on the earth (St. Matt. xvi. 14.).

"Esay" is an older way of writing the name now written in the English Version as Isaiah. It is written "Esay," Ecclus. xlviii. 20, 22; often in the "Homilies," &c.

and prepared for thee twelve trees laden with divers fruits,

19 and as many fountains flowing with milk and honey, and seven mighty mountains, whereupon there grow roses and lilies, whereby I will fill thy children with joy.

"Twelve trees laden with divers fruits." Compare Rev. xxii. 2. Ezek. xlvii. 12.

18, 19. "Twelve" and "seven" are the sacred numbers, symbols of perfection and completeness; they occur frequently in the Book of the Revelation of St. John. See, for instance, vii. 4—8; xxi. 12, 14, 21; xxii. 2; and i. 4, 11—13, 20; ii. 1; v. 6; viii. 2, 6; x. 3; xv. 1, 7.

19. "Fountains flowing with milk and honey." The expression so frequently found, "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii. 8, 17, &c.), is a poetical way of describing a land rich in pastures, from which herds and flocks might gain their abundance of milk, and bright with wild flowers, from which the bees might draw forth their plentiful stores of honey; but in "fountains flowing with milk and honey" the metaphor is more artificial and less natural. The expression seems taken from Job xx. 17, "the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter;" where rivers is used, as in Job xxix. 6. Ps. cxix. 136; xxxvi. 8. Mic. vi. 7, as the emblem of abundance.

"And seven mighty mountains." Compare the Book of Enoch the Prophet: "I went from thence to another place, and saw a mountain of fire flashing both by day and night. I proceeded towards it, and perceived seven splendid mountains, which were all different from each other. Their stones were brilliant and beautiful; all were brilliant and splendid to behold; and beautiful was their surface. Three mountains were toward the East . . . and three toward the South . . . and the seventh mountain was in the midst of them. In length they all resembled the seat of a throne, and odoriferous trees surrounded them. Among these there was a tree of an unceasing smell; nor of those which were in Eden was there one of all the fragrant trees which smelt like this. Its leaf, its flower and its bark never withered, and its fruit was beautiful . . . Then Michael, one of the holy and glorious angels who were with me, . . . answered me, saying: That mountain which thou beholdest, the extent of whose head resembles the seat of the Lord, will be the seat on which shall sit the holy and great Lord of glory, the everlasting King, when He shall come and descend to visit the earth with goodness" (chap. xxiv. Translated from the *Æthiopic*, by Archbishop Laurence).

This Book of Enoch the Prophet was written, as it is supposed, by some Jew, in the century before Christ; perhaps in the time of Herod the Great, somewhere about B.C. 30. It is quoted by St. Jude 14, 15, and other early Christian writers, and throws light upon Jewish ways of thought, and the opinions respecting the Messiah which prevailed in the generation which preceded the birth of our Lord. See the passage quoted in the *Note* on 4 Esdras xiii. 32. It has been translated into English by Archbishop Laurence, from the *Æthiopic* Version, which was made from the Greek. We find in it several passages which illustrate

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, II.

20 Do right to the widow, judge for the fatherless, give to the poor, defend the orphan, clothe the naked,

21 heal the broken and the weak, laugh not a lame man to scorn, defend the maimed, and let the blind man come into the sight of my clearness.

22 Keep the old and young within thy walls.

23 ¹Wheresoever thou findest the dead, ²take ¹Tobit i. 17, 18. ²signing bury them. them and bury them, and I will give thee the first place in my resurrection.

24 Abide still, O my people, and take thy rest, for thy quietness shall come.

25 Nourish thy children, O thou good nurse; stablish their feet.

26 ³As for the servants whom I have given thee, ³John 17. 12.

this book (see ii. 45.) and the Fourth Book of Esdras (see on v. 28, 37; vi. 41, 49; viii. 53; xiii. 4, 32.).

20. Compare Is. i. 17. Ps. lxxxii. 3. Deut. x. 18.

"Clothe the naked." Is. lviii. 7. Job xxxi. 19. St. Matt. xxv. 36.

21. "My clearness." The light, God's bright and precious gift, not unworthy to be the emblem of Himself (St. John viii. 12. 1 John i. 5.) The restoring of sight to the blind may be meant as a parable of the bringing the ignorant to the light of the Truth. Compare Is. xxxv. 5, 6; xlii. 7.

22. "Old and young." The most helpless and feeble classes, who stand most in need of protection.

23. "Take them and bury them." The Latin is, "signing bury them," as in the *Margin*. "Signing" is often used in the technical sense of signing with the sign of the cross; Tertullian, a Latin writer of the second century, frequently so uses it. Are we to conjecture that possibly it is so used here? "Bury them" (Tobit i. 17, 18.). In the Latin, "commend to," "commit to the keeping of the grave." The word is the same as that used in the Office of the Burial of the Dead in the Old Latin Prayer-Books formerly used in England: compare the words of our English service, "We therefore commit his body to the ground," &c.

"I will give thee the first place in my resurrection." The first place, or seat. Compare St. Matt. xx. 21, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom."

24. "Abide still, O my people." Compare Exod. xiv. 14. Ps. xlii. 15.

"Thy quietness shall come;" ver. 34, "He shall give you everlasting rest." Compare Heb. iv. 9. Rev. xiv. 13.

25. "Thy children;" ver. 15. "O thou good nurse." Compare i. 28, and 1 Thess. ii. 7. "Jerusalem, that nursed you," Bar. iv. 8.

"Stablish their feet;" ver. 15.

26. This seems to have been suggested by the words of our Lord, in St. John xvii. 12; xviii. 9, "Of those whom Thou gavest Me, I have lost none."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, II.

there shall not one of them perish; for I will require them from among thy number.

27 Be not weary: for when the day of trouble and heaviness cometh, others shall weep and be sorrowful, but thou shalt be merry and have abundance.

28 The heathen shall envy thee, but they shall be able to do nothing against thee, saith the Lord.

29 My hands shall cover thee, so that thy children shall not see hell.

30 Be joyful, O thou mother, with thy children; for I will deliver thee, saith the Lord.

31 Remember thy children that sleep, for I shall bring them out of the sides of the earth, and shew mercy unto them: for I am merciful, saith the Lord Almighty.

² Or, *preach*. 32 Embrace thy children until I come and ² shew mercy unto them: for my wells run over, and my grace shall not fail.

33 I Esdras received a charge of the Lord upon

"I will require them," compare Ezek. xxxiii. 6, 8, "from among thy number" (vv. 40, 41.).

27. The writer would seem to have in his thoughts St. John xvi. 20, 22, and, representing the promise as now fulfilled, reverses the contrast between the rejoicing of the world and the sorrow of the disciples.

28. "They shall be able to do nothing against thee." Compare Is. liv. 17, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

29. "My hands shall cover thee." Wisd. v. 16, "With His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them."

"Shall not see hell." "Hell" here is Gehenna; meaning not, as "hell" often does, the grave, or death, but the place of torment. Compare St. Matt. x. 28; xviii. 9. St. Mark ix. 43, 45, 47. St. Luke xii. 5.

30. "O thou mother, with thy children." See vv. 15, 17, 31, 41.

31. "I will bring them out of the sides of the earth." See ver. 16. Perhaps the true reading is that of the Dresden MS., "the hiding-places of the earth."

"Shew." The reading of the *Margin*, "preach," that is, proclaim thou mercy unto them, is the true reading, the reading of the manuscripts.

32. "My wells run over." My wells or fountains, overflowing with mercies and blessings. "His compassions fail not, they are new every morning" (Lam. iii. 22, 23.). "Wells," compare also Ps. xxxvi. 9. Jer. ii. 13. Rev. vii. 17.

33—41. Esdras, being set at nought by Israel, calleth unto the Gentiles to enter into the Everlasting Rest.

33. "I Esdras received a charge of the Lord upon mount Oreb." Esdras, who is represented by tradition (see 4 Esdras xiv. 21, 22.) as the

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, II.

the mount Oreb, that I should go unto Israel; but when I came unto them, they set me at nought, and despised the commandment of the Lord.

34 And therefore I say unto you, O ye heathen, that hear and understand, look for your Shepherd, he shall give you ^heverlasting rest; for he is nigh ^h Matt. 11. 29. at hand, that shall come in the end of the world.

35 Be ready to the reward of the kingdom, for the everlasting light shall shine upon you for evermore.

36 Flee ⁱ the shadow of this world, receive the ⁱ 1 Cor. 7. 31.

restorer of the Law, is made to speak as another Moses, the giver of the Law (compare xiv. 4, 5, and Mal. iv. 4.); though the presence of Ezra at Mount Horeb is a flight of the writer's imagination.

33, 34. "When I came unto them, they set me at nought . . . And "therefore I say unto you, O ye heathen, that hear and understand." See on ver. 10, and i. 24; and contrast iii. 32, 34.

The author writes in the name of Esdras, whose genealogy he prefixes to his work; but he does not take any care to adhere to the known facts of the life of Esdras, when he represents him as rejected by the Jews, and therefore turning to the Gentiles. The historical Ezra is a leader and a second restorer of the Jews, under whom took place a great religious revival; and who, so far from offering invitation to the heathen, was overwhelmed with grief that the Jews had formed connections with them.

34. "Look for your Shepherd." Compare St. John x. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 25. Is. xl. 11; xlix. 10. Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24.

"He is nigh at hand." Compare Phil. iv. 4. Rev. xxii. 10, 12; and below, xvi. 52.

"He that shall come in the end of the world." "Yet a little while, "and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37.). "He that shall come," compare xvi. 50.

34, 35. "He is nigh at hand, that shall come . . . Be ready to the "reward of the kingdom." Compare Rev. xxii. 12, "Behold, I come "quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as "his work shall be."

"He shall give you everlasting rest . . . the everlasting light "shall shine upon you for evermore." From this passage are taken the opening words in the Office for the Dead, in the Old Latin Prayer-Books used in England and the West, from the first word of which Office comes the expression a "requiem" for the dead: "Rest eternal grant "unto them, O Lord; and upon them let there shine everlasting light."

35. "The reward of the kingdom." Compare St. Matt. xxv. 34. St. Luke xii. 32.

"The everlasting light shall shine upon you." Compare Is. lx. 19, 20. Rev. xxi. 23, 25; xxii. 5.

36. "The shadow of this world" (ver. 39.). This world, which is but a shadow, quickly passing away, and unsubstantial. "Our time is a "very shadow that passeth away" (Wisd. ii. 5; v. 9. Compare 1 Cor. vii. 31. 1 John ii. 17. 1 Chr. xxxix. 15. Job viii. 9.).

"Receive the joyfulness of your glory: I testify my Saviour "openly." Perhaps suggested by a remembrance of Bar. iv. 22, 24.

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joyfulness of your glory : I testify my Saviour openly.

37 O receive the gift that is given you, and be glad, giving thanks unto him that hath called you to the heavenly kingdom.

^k Rev. 7. 3, 4. 38 Arise up and stand, behold ^k the number of those that be sealed ² in ¹ the feast of the Lord ;

² Or, *for*.
¹ Matt. 22. 1, &c.
Rev. 19. 9.
^m Rev. 3. 4. 39 which are departed from the shadow of the world, and ^m have received glorious garments of the Lord.

ⁿ Rev. 3. 4. & 7. 14.
³ Lat. conclude. 40 Take thy number, O Sion, and ³ shut up those of thine that are clothed in white, which have fulfilled the law of the Lord.

ⁿ Rev. 6. 11. 41 ⁿ The number of thy children, whom thou longedst for, is fulfilled : beseech the power of the Lord,

36, 37. Some sentences from these verses are used in the Introit, or short hymn at the beginning of the Office for Holy Communion for Tuesday in Whitsun-week, in the Old Latin Prayer-Books used formerly in the Diocese of Sarum, and elsewhere in England and the West :

"Receive the joyfulness of your glory. Alleluia!

"Giving thanks to God. Alleluia!

"Who hath called you to the heavenly kingdom. Alleluia!"

37. "That hath called you to the heavenly kingdom." Compare 1 Thess. ii. 12. 1 Pet. v. 10.

38. "Behold the number of those that be sealed." Rev. vii. 4, "I heard the number of them that were sealed."

"The number." See vv. 40, 41.

"Sealed." Compare Rev. vii. 3, 4; xiv. 1. Ezek. ix. 4. Eph. iv. 30, "Sealed unto the day of redemption."

"In the feast of the Lord." The *Margin*, "*for the feast of the Lord*," is a conjecture of Junius (see on xiii. 2.); but the manuscripts here support the printed text.

"The feast of the Lord." Compare Rev. xix. 7, 9. St. Matt. xxii. 2.

39. "The shadow of the world" (ver. 36.), "have received glorious garments." See ver. 40, "clothed in white;" and compare Is. lii. 1; lxi. 10.

40. "O Sion." Heb. xii. 22, "Ye are come unto mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Compare Gal. iv. 26. Rev. iii. 12; xxi. 2, 10.

"Shut up." That is, finish, conclude the numbering, because now the number is complete.

"That are clothed in white." Rev. iii. 4, 5, 18; vi. 11; vii. 9, 13, 14; xix. 8.

"Which have fulfilled the law of the Lord." Compare Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life."

40, 41. "O Sion . . . thy children." Gal. iv. 26, "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

"Children;" vv. 15, 17, 30, 31.

41. "The number of thy children . . . fulfilled." Rev. vi. 11,

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that thy people, which have been called from the beginning, may be hallowed.

42 ° I Esdras saw upon the mount Sion a great peo- ° Rev. 7. 9.
ple, whom I could not number, and they all praised
the Lord with songs.

43 And in the midst of them there was a young
man of a high stature, taller than all the rest, and
upon every one of their heads he set crowns, and was
more exalted; which I marvelled at greatly.

44 So ^p I asked the angel, and said, ² Sir, what are ^p Rev. 7. 14.
these? ² Or, Lord.

45 He answered and said unto me, These be they

"Until their fellowservants also and their brethren . . . should be fulfilled."

"The number;" vv. 38, 40.

"Called from the beginning." Compare St. Matt. xxv. 34. Eph. i. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

"That thy people . . . may be hallowed." Compare Is. lx. 21; lii. 1. Rev. xxi. 27. Heb. xii. 14.

42—48. Esdras beholds the Saints on Mount Sion crowned by the Son of God.

42—47. Here again it will be seen how frequently the writer imitates the Book of the Revelation of St. John.

42. "Mount Sion." In 4 Esdr. xiii. 32—49, there is a vision of the Son of God standing on Mount Sion, destroying the innumerable multitude of the nations assembled together to fight against him, and gathering unto himself the ten tribes, brought back in the latter days from the land of "Arsareth" beyond Euphrates. The two passages may be contrasted, as illustrating the difference of thought and feeling between the writer of this book and of that.

"Upon mount Sion a great people, whom I could not number." Compare Rev. vii. 9.

"They all praised the Lord with songs." Compare Rev. xiv. 1—3. Is. xxxv. 10.

43. "A young man." Compare vv. 46, 47. Unfading youth is taken as the symbol of immortal beauty and strength, undimmed by sickness, care, or pain (compare Phil. iii. 21.). The angel on the morning of the Resurrection thus appears as a "young man" (St. Mark xvi. 5.).

43, 45. "Upon every one of their heads he set crowns." Compare Rev. ii. 10; iii. 11. 1 Cor. ix. 25. 2 Tim. iv. 8. St. James i. 12. 1 Pet. v. 4. Wisd. v. 16, "Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and "a beautiful crown from the Lord's right hand."

44, 45. "Sir, what are these? He answered and said." Imitated from Rev. vii. 13, 14.

44. "Sir" (*Margin*, "Lord"). The usual form of respectful address: translated sometimes "Lord" (as in St. Matt. xxv. 11, 20, 22, 24. St. Luke xiii. 8; xix. 16, 18, 20, 25, compare also 4 Esdr. iv. 3, 5; v. 33;

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that have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God : now are they crowned, and receive palms.

46 Then said I unto the angel, What young person is it that crowneth them, and giveth them palms in their hands?

^a Rev. 2. 13.

47 So he answered and said unto me, ^aIt is the Son of God, whom they have confessed in the world. Then began I greatly to commend them that stood so stiffly for the name of the Lord.

48 Then the angel said unto me, Go thy way, and tell my people what manner of things, and how great wonders of the Lord thy God, thou hast seen.

CHAPTER III.

¹ Esdras is troubled, ¹³ and acknowledgeth the sins of the people: ²⁸ yet complaineth that the heathen were lords over them, being more wicked than they.

x. 34.): sometimes "Sir" (as in Rev. vii. 14. St. John v. 7. St. Matt. xiii. 27; xxi. 30; xxvii. 63. Acts xvi. 30, compare 4 Esdr. ix. 41.)

45. "Have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the immortal." The same figure as in 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54. 2 Cor. v. 4. Compare the Book of Enoch (see on ver. 19.) lxi. 18, "The saints and the elect have "arisen from the earth . . . and have been clothed with the garment of "life. That garment of life is with the Lord of Spirits, in whose presence your garment shall not wax old, nor shall your glory diminish."

"Now are they crowned." See ver. 43.

"And receive palms." Rev. vii. 9.

46. "Young person." See ver. 43.

47. "The Son of God, whom they have confessed in the world." Compare St. Matt. x. 32. St. Luke xii. 8. Rev. iii. 5, and Rev. ii. 10.

"Them that stood so stiffly" (Latin, "bravely") "for the name of "the Lord." Compare Rev. ii. 13; iii. 8, "Thou . . . hast kept my "word, and hast not denied my name." 1 Cor. xvi. 13, "Stand fast in "the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

48. "Go thy way, and tell." Perhaps intended for an adaptation of Rev. i. 11, 19. "Tell my people," ver. 10.

The next chapter does not follow on in the manuscripts as if it formed part of the same book, as in the printed editions; but some break or other mark of distinction is made, such as, "Here endeth the Second Book "of Esdras;" "the second book" (see 2 Esdras i. 1.). In many manuscripts, at the end of this chapter, and before the beginning of the "Fourth Book of Esdras" (iii.—xiv.), there is placed the "Third Book "of Esdras," that is, the book beginning, "And Josias held the feast of "the passover," called in our present Apocrypha, 1 Esdras.

Before the beginning of this chapter, the manuscripts have some such heading as, "Here beginneth the Fourth Book of Esdras."

IN the thirtieth year after the ruin of the city I was in Babylon, and lay troubled upon my bed, and my thoughts came up over my heart :

2 for I saw the desolation of Sion, and the wealth of them that dwelt at Babylon.

3 And my spirit was sore moved, so that I began to speak words full of fear to the most High, and said,

4 O Lord, who bearest rule, thou spakest at the

CHAPTER III.

1—36. The Trouble of Esdras at the Desolation of Sion.

1. "In the thirtieth year after the ruin of the city I was in Babylon." "In the thirtieth year" (ver. 29.). As Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians in B.C. 588, the "thirtieth year" would be B.C. 558, a century before the seventh of Artaxerxes (B.C. 457.), when we first find mention made of the historical Ezra (Ezra vii. 1.); but as the Esdras of this book would appear to be a legendary and not a historical personage (see *Introduction*), this "thirtieth year" may possibly be merely an imitation of Ezek. i. 1, "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year . . . as I was among the captives . . . I saw visions of God." It has, however, been supposed that the writer discloses here the period when he was writing the book, which was after the desolation of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, A.D. 70 (see *Introduction*, and *Notes* on iv. 26; x. 21, 22; xi. 1.); and that, though he speaks of "Babylon" (vv. 2, 28, 31.), he is, under the figure of that former Babylonish captivity, referring to the ruin and calamities wrought in his own times. In Rev. xiv. 8; xviii. 2, 10, the power of the heathen world, then represented by the Roman Empire, is metaphorically described as "Babylon."

"The ruin of the city:" ver. 2, "the desolation of Sion." Compare x. 20—23; xii. 44, 48.

"I was in Babylon:" v. 17, "Israel is committed unto thee in the land of their captivity." In the Latin manuscripts, and in the other versions, after "Babylon" we find these words, "I, Salathiel, who am also Ezras." The words have been omitted in the printed editions, apparently because it seems to have been thought that, when the two preceding chapters were prefixed, the addition would be less marked if these words were omitted from the opening sentence of the original work. In a similar way the ending of the book was cut off (see on xiv. 48—50.). The name Salathiel (which in the Æthiopic Version is here written "Sutuel"), was also the name of the father of Zerubbabel (St. Matt. i. 12. Ezra iii. 2.). Salathiel occurs again (v. 16.) as the name of another person, "Ezras," or "Esdras" (vi. 10; vii. 2, 25; viii. 2, 19; xiv. 1, 38.).

"And lay troubled upon my bed." Compare Dan. iv. 5, "The thoughts upon my bed . . . troubled me."

2. "The wealth of them that dwell at Babylon." Compare ver. 33.

"Wealth;" prosperity (Esth. x. 3.).

3. Compare v. 21, 22; vi. 36, 37; ix. 27, 28; and Ps. xxxix. 3.

4. "O Lord, who bearest rule." God is very often thus addressed in

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beginning, when thou didst plant the earth, and that thyself alone, and commandedst the people,

^a Gen. 2. 7.

5 ^a and gavest a body unto Adam without soul, which was the workmanship of thine hands, and didst breathe into him the breath of life, and he was made living before thee.

6 And thou leddest him into paradise, which thy right hand had planted, before ever the earth came forward.

7 And unto him thou gavest commandment to love thy way: which he transgressed, and immediately thou appointedst death in him and in his generations, of whom came nations, tribes, people, and kindreds, out of number.

^b Gen. 6. 12.

8 ^b And every people walked after their own will, and did wonderful things before thee, and despised thy commandments.

^c Gen. 7. 10.

9 ^c And again in process of time thou broughtest the flood upon those that dwelt in the world, and destroyedst them.

this book, as, for instance, in iv. 38; v. 23, 38; vi. 11; vii. 17, 58*; xii. 7; xiii. 51.

"Commandedst the people." The Syriac and Æthiopic Versions enable us to correct this mistake of the Latin, and to render the passage intelligible by restoring the true reading, "thou commandedst the dust." Compare vi. 53, 54, "Upon the sixth day thou gavest commandment unto the earth, that before thee it should bring forth beasts, cattle, and "creeping things; and after these Adam also" (vii. 62*).

6. "Leddest him into paradise." "Paradise" is the word used in the Greek translation of Genesis (LXX., Gen. ii. 8, 9, 10, 16; iii. 1, 8, 24.) for the "garden" of Eden, which that translation renders "paradise" of delight." "Paradise" is a reproduction of a word found in the Hebrew in Neh. ii. 8. Eccles. ii. 5. Song of Solomon iv. 13; in which places our version gives "forest," or "orchard." In the New Testament "paradise" is used in a secondary and metaphorical sense (Rev. ii. 7. St. Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. xii. 4). See also below, iv. 7; vii. 26*, 123 (53.); viii. 52.

"Before ever the earth came forward;" that is, paradise was finished sooner than the rest of the earth; all things therein, trees and flowers, and soil and climate, were in their perfection and beauty before the outer world had been brought to completeness.

7. Adam "transgressed;" vii. 11.

8. "Walked after their own will." Compare Is. liii. 6; lvi. 11. Prov. i. 31; and below, xiii. 54, "Thou hast forsaken thine own way;" and xiv. 34, "If ye will subdue your own understanding."

"Wonderful things." The Syriac and Æthiopic Versions read, "evil things;" and add at the end of the verse, "and thou didst not hinder them."

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10 And it came to pass in every of them, that as death was to Adam, so was the flood to these.

11 Nevertheless one of them thou leftest, namely,
^d Noah with his household, of whom came all righteous men. ^d 1 Pet. 3. 20.

12 And it happened, that when they that dwelt upon the earth began to multiply, and had gotten them many children, and were a great people, they began again to be more ungodly than the first.

13 Now when they lived so wickedly before thee,
^e thou didst choose thee a man from among them, ^e Gen. 12. 1.
 whose name was ^f Abraham. ^f Gen. 17. 5.

14 Him thou lovedst, and unto him only thou shewedst thy will:

15 and madest an everlasting covenant with him, promising him that thou wouldest never forsake his seed.

16 ^g And unto him thou gavest Isaac, and ^h unto Isaac also thou gavest Jacob and Esau. As for ^g Gen. 21. 2, 3.
^h Gen. 25. 25, 26.
 Jacob, thou ⁱ didst choose him to thee, and put by ⁱ Mal. 1. 2, 3.
 Esau: and so Jacob became a great multitude. ⁱ Rom. 9. 13.

17 And it came to pass, that when thou leddest his seed out of Egypt, ^k thou broughtest them up to ^k Ex. 19. 1.
 the mount Sinai. ^k Deut. 4. 10.

18 And bowing the heavens, thou didst set fast the

10. "In every one of them." The original text appears to have been to this effect, "and a like judgment;" or, "one common lot befell them."

11. "Leftest;" Neh. ix. 28. These somewhat rugged but strong forms, which are frequent in the English Version of the Scriptures, are now becoming almost archaic: in this chapter there are several instances (x. 49, "beganest." Compare "forsookest," Neh. ix. 19, &c.).

"Noah . . . of whom came all righteous men." It is difficult to see what is meant by this; the manuscripts of the Latin show that we should read, "and all the righteous sprang from him;" the Arabic renders, "and his household, for they were all righteous, as was he."

14. "Him thou lovedst, and unto him only thou shewedst thy will." Compare Gen. xviii. 17. St. John xv. 15. It seems, however, probable that for "will" we should read "the end of the times;" Thy purpose, and the things Thou didst intend to bring to pass in the latter times (compare Gen. xxii. 17, 18. St. John viii. 56.). At the end of the verse, the printed text omits "secretly by night," which should be added from the manuscripts and versions. Compare Gen. xv. 12.

15. "An everlasting covenant." Gen. xvii. 7.

16. "Thou didst . . . put by Esau." Mal. i. 2, 3.

18. "Bowing the heavens (compare Ps. xviii. 9.), thou didst set fast the earth." Read rather with the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic

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earth, movedst the whole world, and madest the depths to tremble, and troubledst the men of that age.

19 And thy glory went through four gates, of fire, and of earthquake, and of wind, and of cold; that thou mightest give the law unto the seed of Jacob, ²and diligence unto the generation of Israel.

² Or, and to all the generation of Israel, that they should keep it with diligence.

20 And yet tookest thou not away from them a wicked heart, that thy law might bring forth fruit in them.

21 For the first Adam bearing a wicked heart transgressed, and was overcome; and so be all they that are born of him.

¹ Rom. 7. 8, &c.

22 Thus ¹infirmity was made permanent; and the law (also) in the heart of the people with the ma-

Versions (in the Armenian some verses are omitted here), "thou didst "shake the earth." See Exod. xix. 18, 19. Ps. lxxviii. 8. Heb. xii. 26.

"Troubledst the men of that ago." With this rendering compare Exod. xix. 16. Heb. xii. 20, 21.

19. "Through four gates . . . of cold." We have no mention of this in Exod. xix. 16—18, among the phenomena attending the manifestation of the Divine presence. Compare the description in Ps. xviii. 7—15. In 1 Kin. xix. 11, 12, wind, earthquake, and fire are the precludes of the drawing near of God.

"And diligence unto the generation of Israel." Diligence, from its sense of a careful obedience to God's commands, has passed on into denoting those commands themselves; it is so used here in parallelism to "law;" and again in vii. 37*, "whose commands (diligence) thou didst despise." The translators, apparently not quite understanding this use of the word rendered "diligence," have, without any necessity, placed in the *Margin* a conjectural emendation suggested by Junius. See on xiii. 2.

20. Esdras pleads with God that it was of little avail for Him to have given the Law to Israel, telling them what they ought to do, while leaving in them a wicked heart and rebellious passions. Compare Ezek. xi. 19, 20; xxxvi. 26, 27; and below, vii. 119—125 (49—55).

"Wicked heart . . . fruit." In our Lord's parable, those only bring forth fruit who receive the seed in an honest and good heart (St. Luke viii. 15.).

20, 21, 26. "Wicked heart." Compare iv. 4, 30; vii. 48*, 68*; ix. 19; and Gen. vi. 5; viii. 21. In vii. 92* it is noted, among those things which make the happiness of the souls of the righteous who have departed this life, that in the world to come they call to mind how with great toil they did strive to conquer the evil desires created with them, that they might not seduce them from life to death.

22. "The law." If by "law" here we understand God's law, the meaning seems to be that the law, though not formally rejected, yet remained side by side with an infirmity and malignity of heart which prevented it having any practical effect. Possibly "law" may be used

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lignity of the root; so that the good departed away, and the evil abode still.

23 So the times passed away, and the years were brought to an end: ^m then didst thou raise thee up a servant, called David: ^m 1 Sam. 16. 13.

24 ⁿ whom thou commandedst to build a city unto thy name, and to offer incense and oblations unto thee therein. ⁿ 2 Sam. 5. 2. & 7. 5, 13.

25 When this was done many years, then they that inhabited the city forsook thee,

26 and in all things did even as Adam and all his generations had done: for they also had a wicked heart:

27 and so thou gavest thy city over into the hands of thine enemies.

28 Are their deeds then any better that inhabit Babylon, that they should therefore have the dominion over Sion?

29 For when I came thither, and had seen impieties without number, then my soul saw many evildoers in this thirtieth year, so that my heart failed me.

30 For I have seen how thou sufferest them sinning, and hast spared wicked doers: and hast de-

here, as in Rom. vii. 23, in the sense of principle, settled rule, of wickedness.

“The malignity of the root.” See on viii. 53.

24. “Whom thou commandedst to build a city unto thy name.” David was not commanded to build a city, but a house for God’s name (2 Sam. vii. 5, 13.); the Armenian Version paraphrases here by “temple.”

“A city unto thy name.” Compare Jer. xxv. 29. Dan. ix. 18, 19.

25, 26. Compare ix. 32. Compare the confession of national sinfulness in Bar. i. 17, 18, 21, 22, imitated from Dan. ix. 9—11; and Song of the Three Holy Children, vv. 6, 7.

27. “Gavest . . . over into the hands of thine enemies.” Compare Neh. ix. 27. Ps. cvi. 41, 42.

“Thine enemies;” ver. 30. Compare, for instance, Num. x. 35. Ps. lxxviii. 1. Judg. v. 31. Ps. lxxiv. 4, 23; lxxxix. 10; cx. 1, 2.

29. “In this thirtieth year.” The Æthiopic, Arabic, and Armenian translations intimate that the reading of the original was rather, “during these thirty years.” Not in this one year alone, but during all the time Esdras had been in Babylon he had marked the iniquities which were going on around. Compare ver. 1.

30. “I have seen how thou sufferest them sinning, and hast spared wicked doers.” Compare Ps. lxxiii. 3.

“Hast destroyed thy people.” “Thy people.” See iv. 23; v. 27; viii. 15, 16.

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stroyed thy people, and hast preserved thine enemies, and hast not signified it.

² Or, *I conceive*.

31 ² I do not remember how this way may be left: Are they then of Babylon better than they of Sion?

32 Or is there any other people that knoweth thee beside Israel? or what generation hath so believed thy covenants as Jacob?

33 And yet their reward appeareth not, and their labour hath no fruit: for I have gone here and there ³ through the heathen, and I see that they ³ flow in wealth, and think not upon thy commandments.

34 Weigh thou therefore our wickedness now in the balance, and their's also that dwell in the world; and so shall thy name no where be found but in Israel.

35 Or when was it that they which dwell upon the earth have not sinned in thy sight? or what people have so kept thy commandments?

36 Thou shalt find that Israel by name hath kept thy precepts; but not the heathen.

30, 31. "And hast not signified it. I do not remember how this way may be left." An error of a transcriber of the Latin, mistaking the very similar words, "nemini," "memini," which in manuscript would be almost identical, has rendered this passage unintelligible. The other versions enable us to supply the correction, "Thou hast not signified in any way to any one how this way may be left." "May be left:" given up and abandoned. The Syriac Version has, however, probably preserved the true reading of the Greek, "how this way may be understood." "This way:" thou hast not explained to any this thy strange and mysterious way of destroying thy friends, and preserving thine enemies. Compare v. 34; and Ps. lxxiii., lxxiv., xciv. 3, "How long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?" See iv. 23—25.

34. "So shall thy name no where be found but in Israel." "Israel" appears to have crept in by an error; but it is difficult to decide what may have been the original text. It would seem, however, on comparing the manuscripts and Versions, that the passage was probably to this effect, "And so shall it be found, which way the balance doth incline;" whose sins are the heavier when they are weighed together, the sins of Israel or the sins of the heathen. "Thy name no where found but in Israel" may have been suggested by such places as Is. lxiii. 19. Dan. ix. 18, 19. Deut. xxviii. 10. 2 Chr. vii. 14. Jer. xiv. 9. Compare 1 Esdr. vi. 1. 2 Esdr. i. 24.

36. "Thou shalt find that Israel by name hath kept thy precepts." "Israel" appears to have been inserted as an explanation by the translators; it is not in the printed text. The original, however, appears to have been, "Thou shalt find that men by name" (here and there among those that dwell upon the earth, some few who can be reckoned by name) "have kept thy precepts, but not a nation."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IV.

CHAPTER IV.

¹ *The angel declareth the ignorance of Esdras in God's judgments, 13 and adviseth him not to meddle with things above his reach. 23 Nevertheless Esdras asketh divers questions, and receiveth answers to them.*

AND the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me an answer,

2 and said, Thy heart hath gone too far in this world, and thinkest thou to comprehend the way of the most High?

3 Then said I, Yea, my lord. And he answered

CHAPTER IV.

iv—v. 19. The First Vision.

iv. 1—v. 13. Ezra is reproved by the Angel for seeking to enquire too curiously into the mysterious ways of God's Providence; he is warned that the End of the World is approaching, and is told of the Signs which shall betoken the coming of the Last Days.

1. "Uriel;" ver. 36; v. 20; vii. 1; x. 28. The word signifies the "Light of God," and occurs as a proper name, 1 Chr. vi. 24; xv. 5, 11. 2 Chr. xiii. 2. It is found frequently in the Book of Enoch (see on ii. 19.), as the name of "one of the holy angels," who appears to Enoch and shows unto him wondrous things. For instance, in chap. ix., "Michael and Gabriel, Raphael, Suryal, and Uriel." In chap. xx., Uriel is reckoned among the angels who watch, and is described as "one of the holy angels, who presides over clamour and terror." In ch. lxxiv., "Uriel, the angel whom the Lord of Glory appointed over all the 'luminaries.'"

2. "Thy heart hath gone too far in this world." Thy spirit hath been overbold, and thine heart hath been troubled overmuch with perplexities, in trying to understand the difficulties and seeming inconsistencies in the Divine scheme of moral government in the world. Compare ver. 34; v. 44.

"Thinkest thou to comprehend the way of the most High?" These words may be taken as sounding, by anticipation, the key-note of the answer to some of the perplexities concerning God's dealing with the human race and with Israel which find expression in the earlier chapters of this book. See also vv. 10, 11; vii. 19; and compare Job xi. 7, 8. Rom. xi. 33. Eccles. iii. 11; xi. 5; and viii. 17. "Then I beheld 'all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done, 'because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; 'yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able 'to find it.' These words of Eccles. serve as the text of Bishop Butler's well-known sermon, "Upon the Ignorance of Man;" the reflections in which are commended to the attention of any who may think that the writer of the Fourth Book of Esdras has raised some hard questions, without in all cases giving to them a sufficient reply. See also *Note* at the end of the Third Vision.

3—5. "My lord." See on x. 34.

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me, and said, I am sent to shew thee three ways, and to set forth three similitudes before thee :

4 whereof if thou canst declare me one, I will shew thee also the way that thou desirest to see, and I shall shew thee from whence the wicked heart cometh.

5 And I said, Tell on, my lord. Then said he unto me, Go thy way, weigh me the weight of the fire, or measure me the blast of the wind, or call me again the day that is past.

6 Then answered I and said, What man is able to do that, that thou shouldest ask such things of me?

7 And he said unto me, If I should ask thee how great dwellings are in the midst of the sea, or how many springs are in the beginning of the deep, or how many springs are above the firmament, or which are the outgoings of paradise :

8 peradventure thou wouldest say unto me, I never went down into the deep, nor as yet into hell, neither did I ever climb up into heaven.

9 Nevertheless now have I asked thee but only of the fire and wind, and of the day wherethrough thou hast passed, and of things from which thou canst not

4. Compare the form of the reply in St. Matt. xxi. 24.

"From whence the wicked heart cometh." "The wicked heart." compare iii. 20, 21, 26; vii. 48*. "The evil seed" (vv. 30, 31.). "The root of evil" (viii. 53.) Compare Heb. iii. 12.

5. "Measure me the blast of the wind." The Latin seems the more poetical way of expressing the thought; the Syriac has, "the measure of the wind." The science of later times has succeeded in measuring the force of the wind, and weighing the weight of the air.

7. "In the midst of the sea." *Lit.* in the heart of the sea (Exod. xv. 8. See xiii. 25.).

"How many springs are above the firmament." The other versions suggest that the word they found here in the original was "paths," or "ways."

"Which are the outgoings of paradise." "Paradise" (vii. 36*, 123 (53), *Note*; viii. 52.). The other versions supply the preceding clause, which has dropped out of the Latin, "Or which are the ways out of Hades (Hell)." To this omitted clause reference is made in ver. 8, "I never went down . . . as yet into hell."

8. Compare Bar. iii. 29, 30; and Rom. x. 6, 7, where application is made of Deut. xxx. 12, 13.

9—11. Compare a similar argument in Eccles. xi. 5, and see Wisd. ix. 16, "Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon

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be separated, and yet canst thou give me no answer of them.

10 He said moreover unto me, Thine own things, and such as are grown up with thee, canst thou not know;

11 how should thy vessel then be able to comprehend the way of the Highest, and, the world being now outwardly corrupted, to understand the ² corruption that is evident in my sight? ^{2 Or, incorruption.}

12 Then said I unto him, It were better that we

“earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us: but “the things that are in heaven who hath searched out?” See also below, v. 40.

11. “**Thy vessel.**” Compare vii. 88*. 2 Cor. iv. 7; and also 1 Thess. iv. 4. 1 Pet. iii. 7. The earthly understanding, as contained in a corruptible body, which presseth down the soul, and in an earthly tabernacle which weigheth down the mind, that museth upon many things (Wisd. ix. 15.), partaketh of the infirmity of the body in which it is held. In the Epistle of Barnabas (vii. and xi.), one of the ancient authors in which 2 Esdras is quoted (see on v. 5.), our Lord’s body is spoken of as the vessel of his Spirit.

“**And, the world being now outwardly corrupted, to understand the corruption that is evident in my sight?**” The Latin here is confused and incorrect; the translators have made a suggestion in the *Margin*, “incorruption,” which is in the right direction, and confirmed by the best manuscripts of the Latin. We find from the other Versions that the original text ran thus, “For from that” (“in that,” Syriac) “which is incomprehensible is formed the way of the Most High; “and thou being corruptible, in a corruptible world, canst not understand “the ways of Him who is incorruptible (see ver. 2.). And when I “heard these things, I fell upon my face.”

“**Incomprehensible . . . the way of the most High.**” The Arabic paraphrases, “For the ways of the Most High cannot be comprehended, “nor His government thoroughly searched out.” Compare Eccles. iii. 11, “No man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning “to the end.” Rom. xi. 33, “How unsearchable are His judgments, “and His ways past finding out!” and Wisd. ix. 13, 16. Job xi. 7, 8. Eccles. xvi. 20—22; xxxix. 34; and above, ver. 2. “I fell upon my “face.” Compare Ezek. i. 28; iii. 23; xliii. 3; xlv. 4. Dan. viii. 17. See also below, x. 30. The Oriental Versions here preserve the true reading, which has become corrupted in the Latin, though some traces may be discerned in “my sight” (face).

12. Compare vii. 116, 117 (46, 47.), where the same thought is more fully expressed; and see also vii. 63*—69*, where the writer pathetically laments that man had been born, and endued with intelligence; protesting that the lot of beasts is better than that of man, in that they have not to look forward to judgment and punishment in the future life after death.

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were not at all, than that we should live still in wickedness, and to suffer, and not to know wherefore.

13 He answered me, and said, I went into a forest into a plain, and the ^a trees took counsel,

^a Judg. 9. 8.
² Chr. 25. 18.

14 and said, Come, let us go and make war against the sea, that it may depart away before us, and that we may make us more woods.

15 The floods of the sea also in like manner took counsel, and said, Come, let us go up and subdue the woods of the plain, that there also we may make us another country.

16 The thought of the wood was in vain, for the fire came and consumed it.

17 The thought of the floods of the sea came likewise to nought, for the sand stood up and stopped them.

18 If thou wert judge now betwixt these two, whom wouldest thou begin to justify? or whom wouldest thou condemn?

19 I answered and said, Verily it is a foolish thought ² Or, *the land*. that they both have devised, for ² the ground is given

13. "I went." This is the reading of the Latin, but the Oriental Versions show that the reading of the original was, "the *trees* of the forest of the plain went forth and took counsel." Compare ver. 15.

"The trees took counsel." Compare the fables in Judg. ix. 8. 2 Chr. xxv. 18.

15. "Another country." Further space and extent over which the waters might prevail.

17. "The sand . . . stopped them." Compare Jer. v. 22.

18. "Whom wouldest thou begin to justify." To justify, to consider to be in the right, and give sentence accordingly; as in Prov. xvii. 15, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just," &c. Deut. xxv. 1, "They shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." Compare 1 Kin. viii. 32; and also 2 Sam. xv. 4. Ps. lxxxii. 3, where the translation is slightly different. See below, x. 16. Esth. x. 12.

19—21. "The sea hath his place . . . the sea to his floods." "His" is constantly employed in the English Version, where in more modern phrase we should say "its," a form which was not in use when this translation was put forth. In Lev. xxv. 5, the older editions have "its." Compare Exod. xiv. 27, "The sea returned to his strength." Ps. lxxv. 7 (Prayer-Book), "the noise of his waves." Jonah i. 15. "the sea ceased from *her* raging." Compare below, v. 5, "the stone shall give his voice;" v. 9, "then shall . . . understanding withdraw *itself* into *his* secret chamber;" ix. 37, "the law . . . remaineth in his force;" xiv. 10, "the world hath lost his youth." The instances in the English

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unto the wood, and the sea also hath his place to bear his ² floods.

² Or, *waves.*

20 Then answered he me, and said, Thou hast given a right judgment, but why judgest thou not thyself also?

21 For like as ³ the ground is given unto the wood, and the sea to his floods: even so ^b they that dwell upon the earth may understand nothing but that which is upon the earth: and he that dwelleth above the heavens may only understand the things that are above the height of the heavens.

³ Or, *the land.*

^b Is. 55. 8. 9.

John 3. 31.

1 Cor. 2. 14.

22 Then answered I and said, I beseech thee, O Lord, let me have understanding:

23 for it was not my mind to be curious of the high things, but of such as pass by us daily, namely, wherefore Israel is given up as a reproach to the heathen, and for what cause the people whom thou hast loved is given over unto ungodly nations,

Version are innumerable: Num. xx. 8, "speak ye unto the rock . . . and "*it shall give forth his water.*" St. Mark ix. 50. St. Luke xiv. 34, "if "*the salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be seasoned?*" St. Matt. xxvi. 52, "Put up again thy sword into his place." Acts xii. 10. Exod. xxvii. 2, 3; xxxi. 8, 9; xxxvii. 16, 17; xxxix. 33; xl. 10, 11, &c.

21. "And he that dwelleth above the heavens." The Latin may be translated, "and they who dwell above the heavens;" so Junius (see on xiii. 2.), and the Armenian Version, which renders, "even so, "to them who are on the earth it is given to know the things of earth; "and to them who are in heaven to understand the things of heaven." The context would seem to require this, but the Syriac and Arabic Versions take the words in the same way as the English Version.

23. "Wherefore Israel is given as a reproach unto the heathen." See Note on v. 23—30. Compare Joel ii. 17, "give not thine heritage "to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them." Compare Ps. xlv. 13, 14; lxxix. 4. Lam. v. 1, 2. Bar. ii. 4; iii. 8. Tobit iii. 4, "a proverb of reproach to all the nations among whom we are "dispersed." Esdras might have answered his own question by remembering some one or two, among such passages as these: Lev. xxvi. 14—39. Deut. xxviii. 37. 1 Kin. ix. 7. Jer. xxiv. 9; xxix. 18; xlii. 18; xlv. 8, 12. Ezek. v. 14, 15; xxii. 4. Dan. ix. 12—14. Compare Bar. ii., and the Song of the Three Holy Children, vv. 5—8; and Tobit iii. 4, 5.

"The people whom thou hast loved;" v. 27; vi. 58; iii. 30. Mal. i. 1.

"Given over unto the ungodly nations;" v. 29. Song of the Three Holy Children, ver. 9, "Thou didst deliver us into the hands of law-
"less enemies, most hateful forsakers of God." "Sinners of the Gentiles," Gal. ii. 15; "dogs," St. Matt. xv. 26.

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and why the law of our forefathers is brought
²Or, *no where.* to nought, and the written covenants come ²to none effect,

24 and we pass away out of the world as grasshoppers, and our life is astonishment and fear, and we are not worthy to obtain mercy.

25 What will he then do unto his name whereby we are called? of these things have I asked.

26 Then answered he me, and said, The more thou searchest, the more thou shalt marvel; for the world hasteth fast to pass away,

24. "We pass away out of the world as grasshoppers." Compare Ps. cix. 23.

"Our life is astonishment and fear." The Syriac and Æthiopic Versions have "vapour." Compare St. James iv. 14.

25. "What will he then do unto his name?" Compare Josh. vii. 9, "what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?" Compare also the purport of Exod. xxxii. 12. Num. xiv. 13; and also of such places as Ps. xxv. 11; xxxi. 3; lxxix. 9; cxliii. 11, "for Thy name's sake." See also Song of the Three Holy Children, ver. 20, "Deliver us also "according to Thy marvellous works, and give glory to Thy name, O "Lord;" and x. 22.

"His name whereby we are called." It was one of the peculiar prerogatives in which Israel gloried, that the name of the Lord God was called upon them (x. 22. 1 Esdr. vi. 1.), or (as the words are usually rendered) that they were called by the name of the Lord God. See Eccus. xxxvi. 12. Deut. xxviii. 10. 2 Chr. vii. 14. Is. lxiii. 19. Jer. xiv. 9; xv. 16. Dan. ix. 18, 19. Bar. ii. 15. Amos ix. 12, cited in Acts xv. 17. Contrast 2 Esdr. i. 24.

26. "The world hasteth fast to pass away." See also v. 50; vi. 18—20; xiv. 10—17. Compare also 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. Rom. xiii. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 7, "the end of all things is at hand."

The writer, in describing the thoughts and feelings of a devout Jew, represented as living during the Babylonish captivity, ought in consistency to have put into his mouth some reference to the prophecies of the coming restoration to Judæa, and the bringing back the sacred vessels of the Temple (e.g. Jer. xxvii. 22; xxix. 10; and contrast Bar. ii. 30—35.). The author of the Fourth Book of Esdras, however, looks forward to the end of the world, now near at hand, as the time of deliverance. It has been supposed that this book was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (see *Introduction*), when the Jewish nation and polity were finally ruined, and such thoughts as these fall in very well with such a supposition. In times of desolation and oppression (x. 7, 20—23), when men's dearest hopes have been disappointed, it seems a natural feeling, which has often found expression, that the time has come when so evil a world ought to be drawing to its end, and the signs of the coming deliverance (xii. 31—34; xiii. 49.) be discerned. See also on xiv. 35.

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27 and cannot comprehend the things that are promised to the righteous in time to come: for ^c this ^{c 1 John 5. 19.} world is full of unrighteousness and infirmities.

28 But as concerning the things whereof thou askest me, I will tell thee; for the evil is sown, but the destruction thereof is not yet come.

29 If therefore that which is sown be not turned upside down, and if the place where the evil is sown pass not away, then cannot it come that is sown with good.

30 For the grain of evil seed hath been sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning, and how much ungodliness hath it brought up unto this time? and how much shall it yet bring forth until the ² time of threshing come?

² Or, *floor*.

27. "And cannot comprehend the things promised to the righteous in time to come." The Latin (printed text, supported by the manuscripts and Versions) has, "is not able to bear the things promised to the righteous." The translators may have used "comprehend" in the sense of containing together at one and the same time. The present evil world, with its wickedness and misery, must needs pass away, for it is inconsistent with the state of things in the new world, wherein righteousness doth dwell. The two cannot be in the world at once.

"This world is full of unrighteousness and infirmities." For "unrighteousness," the manuscripts of the Latin and of the other Versions read, "mourning," or "sadness." Compare Rom. viii. 22, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

28. "The destruction thereof is not yet come." This rendering, which is that of the Latin, gives the meaning and the interpretation; but the word used in the original seems to have been, as we may judge from the Syriac and Æthiopic Versions, "the reaping," the "harvest," thus carrying on the metaphor in both clauses. Compare ver. 30, "the time of threshing." Threshing is not unfrequently used as a metaphor for punishing, or destroying. Compare, for instance, Is. xli. 15, 16. Jer. li. 33. The evil deeds have been done, but their complete results are not yet seen, their full punishment has not yet come. Compare Eccus. vii. 3, "sow not upon the furrows of unrighteousness, and thou shalt not reap them sevenfold." Hos. viii. 7, "they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." Compare Hos. x. 12, 13. Prov. xxii. 8. Job iv. 8. Gal. vi. 7, 8.

29. If this present evil world pass not away, the future world wherein dwelleth righteousness (compare vi. 27, 28.) will not come.

"Turned upside down." This is the reading of the Latin; the Syriac and Æthiopic Versions have "reaped" (see on ver. 28.), which suggests the same thought in a more figurative and expressive way.

30, 31. "The grain of evil seed sown in the heart." See ver. 4. Compare iii. 20, 21, 26; viii. 53.

30. "The time of threshing;" vv. 32, 35, threshing—"floor." Compare St. Matt. iii. 12; xiii. 30, 39. Rev. xiv. 15.

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31 Ponder now by thyself, how great fruit of wickedness the grain of evil seed hath brought forth.

32 And when the ears shall be cut down, which are without number, how great a floor shall they fill?

33 Then I answered and said, How, and when shall these things come to pass? wherefore are our years few and evil?

34 And he answered me, saying, Do not thou hasten above the most Highest: for thy haste is in vain to be above him, for thou hast much exceeded.

31. "Ponder now by thyself." Compare vii. 57*.

32. "When the ears shall be cut down." "Cut down" is an error of the printed text; the manuscripts of the Latin and the other Versions have "sown." According to the Latin, we seem to have a reason here against delaying the judgment and the end of the world, lest by this delay the growth of wickedness should be immeasurably increased. Behold, how great a crop of wickedness the evil seed sown in the heart hath produced already, and will keep on producing till the great day of the Divine threshing; but if this crop be continually allowed to seed itself in again, how vast will be the harvest of iniquity, when the reaping does come at last! It would seem, however, from the Syriac and Æthiopic Versions, that some words may have dropped out of the Latin which give the sentence an entirely different turn, "when the ears of the good seed shall have been sown." The words are meant to console and encourage Esdras. "If wickedness, which is something against the "original appointment of God" (the householder who sowed good seed in his field, St. Matt. xiii. 24.), "has thus grown and increased, how much more shall goodness, which is in accordance with the disposition and "purpose of the Creator, when it has free course and the hindrances to "its growth are removed, grow on to produce its full results in an infinite harvest of blessings." To this the answer in ver. 33 seems to refer, Why is the coming of this good time delayed, while we are left meanwhile in misery and sin?

33. "Our years few and evil." Gen. xlvii. 9. Compare Rom. viii. 22.

34. "Do not thou hasten above the most Highest." Compare v. 44; vi. 34; and above, ver. 2. Be not impatient for the explanation of difficulties, which the Most Highest seeth fit yet to withhold; seek not, as though thou wouldst be wiser than God, to hurry on the counsels of Him Who is longsuffering and eternal. "He that believeth shall not make haste" (Is. xxviii. 16. Compare 2 Pet. iii. 9.).

"Thy haste is in vain to be above him, for thou hast much exceeded." The text, as here given by the translators, seems to have been intended to mean, "It is in vain for thee, with all thy impatience, to try to penetrate secrets which the Most Highest has not revealed, for thou hast in boldness and intrusive presumption exceeded the bounds of "reverence and faith" (compare ver. 2.). This does not, however,

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35 Did not the souls also of the righteous ask question of these things in their chambers, saying, How long shall I hope on this fashion? when cometh the fruit of the floor of our reward?

36 And unto these things ²Uriel the archangel ²Or, *Jeremiel*. gave them answer, and said, Even when the number

represent the original text. The Latin manuscripts vary, but the other Versions show that the passage should be read to this effect, "Thou dost hasten" (art impatient) "for thine own sake, but the Most Highest" (the Armenian Version supplies, "is longsuffering") "for the sake of all." The Creator and Ruler of all takes a wider view of that which affects the interests and destiny of all than can be taken by any one among the children of men.

35. "Did not the souls of the righteous ask . . . in their chambers . . . How long?" Note the striking resemblance between this passage and Rev. vi. 9, 10. Compare also below, xv. 8, 9 (5 Esdras). "In their chambers;" vv. 41, 42, "In the grave the chambers of souls;" vii. 32, where the word is translated "secret places;" 95*, 101*. The writer believed that the souls of men existed after death (vii. 101*), preserved in Hades, or hell (St. Luke xvi. 23.), the unseen, covered, secret place, until the resurrection, when "the secret places shall deliver up the souls that were committed unto them" (vii. 32. See also vii. 78*—101*.).

"How long shall I hope on this fashion?" The original probably was, "How long here?" the sentence being purposely left incomplete for the sake of emphasis, as in Ps. vi. 3, "Lord, how long?" The Latin has somewhat awkwardly completed the sentence with the singular. We should rather, with the other versions and one manuscript of the Latin, fill up the expressive ellipse in the plural, "How long (shall we be, or, be kept waiting and longing) here?"

"The fruit of the floor of our reward." "The fruit of the floor," the ingathered harvest threshed out and laid up in store. Compare Gal. vi. 9, "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

36. "Uriel the archangel" (iv. 1.). The Latin has *Jeremiel* (see *Margin*), which seems to be the same name as that written *Jerahmeel* in some places of our version of the Old Testament (Jer. xxxvi. 26. 1 Chr. ii. 25, 26, 42; xxiv. 29.). The Syriac gives the name in a more contracted form, *Ramiel* (the mercy of God).

"Even when the number of seeds is fulfilled in you." This is without meaning; the word "seeds" has come into the Latin from some mistake of the transcribers, and by the alteration of a few letters may be made to agree with the reading of the other versions, which have, "when the number of those like thee is fulfilled." "Those like thee;" compare viii. 51; and xiv. 9, "thou . . . shalt remain with my Son, and with such as be like thee, until the times be ended." Here again, as in ver. 35, the resemblance to Rev. vi. 11 is very striking, "until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." It does not of necessity follow that one passage was taken from the other, but it shows that the same thought was presented to the writers of both passages.

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of seeds is filled in you : for he hath weighed the world in the balance.

37 By measure hath he measured the times, and by number hath he numbered the times ; and he doth not move nor stir them, until the said measure be fulfilled.

38 Then answered I and said, O Lord that bearest rule, even we all are full of impiety.

39 And for our sakes peradventure it is that the floors of the righteous are not filled, because of the sins of them that dwell upon the earth.

40 So he answered me, and said, Go thy way to a woman with child, and ask of her when she hath fulfilled her nine months, if her womb may keep the birth any longer within her.

41 Then said I, No, Lord, that can she not. And he said unto me, In the grave the chambers of souls are like the womb of a woman :

42 For like as a woman that travaileth maketh haste to escape the necessity of the travail : even so do these places haste to deliver those things that are committed unto them

43 from the beginning ; look, what thou desirest to see, it shall be shewed thee.

36, 37. "He hath weighed the world in the balance . . . By "measure hath he measured," &c. Compare Is. xl. 12. Job xxviii. 25. Wisd. xi. 20, "thou hast ordered all things in measure and number "and weight."

37. "The said measure." "The said;" the predicted, the fore-appointed.

38. "O Lord that bearest rule" (iii. 4.) "we are all full of impiety." Compare iii. 21, 26 ; vii. 46*, 119—122 (49—52.) ; viii. 35.

39. "The floors," as in vv. 32 and 35. On account of the wickedness of the world, the great harvest is delayed, when the wheat shall be separated from the chaff and gathered into God's barn (St. Matt. iii. 12 ; xiii. 30.).

41. "In the grave the chambers of souls;" ver. 35 ; vii. 32. "In the grave," or, rather, as the word is translated in the Apostle's Creed, "hell" (Rev. xx. 13 ; Acts ii. 27.). Hades, the realm of the dead, whose bodies were in the grave, whose souls were abiding in their chambers, or secret places, the storehouses of departed spirits.

43. "From the beginning, look." "From the beginning:" these words should go with the preceding sentence. "Look" is inserted by the translators, apparently from conjecture, as it is not in the printed Latin text ; the manuscripts of the Latin insert "these," and the

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44 Then answered I and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, and if it be possible, and if I be meet therefore,

45 shew me then whether there be more to come than is past, or more past than is to come.

46 What is past I know, but what is for to come I know not.

47 And he said unto me, Stand up upon the right side, and I shall expound the similitude unto thee.

48 So I stood, and saw, and, behold, an hot burning oven passed by before me: and it happened, that when the flame was gone by I looked, and, behold, the smoke remained still.

49 After this there passed by before me a watery cloud, and sent down much rain with a storm; and when the stormy rain was past, the drops remained still.

50 Then said he unto me, Consider with thyself; as the rain is more than the drops, and as the fire is greater than the smoke; but the drops and the smoke remain behind: so the ²quantity which is past did ²Or, *measure*. more exceed.

51 Then I prayed, and said, May I live, thinkest thou, until that time? or ³what shall happen in ³Or, *who shall be?* Manuscript. those days?

sentence should be read, "So do these places" (the chambers where the souls are kept after death, ver. 35.) "hasten to deliver those things that have been committed unto them from the beginning; then" ("in that day," Æthiopic) "there shall be shewed unto thee concerning those things which thou desirest to see."

44. "If I have found favour in thy sight." So again, v. 56; vi. 11; vii. 75*, 102*; viii. 42; xii. 7; xiv. 22.

50. "But the drops and the smoke remain behind: so the quantity which is past did more exceed." It does not appear why the translators have thus transposed these clauses, which as they stand in the Latin, and in all the other Versions, bring out the meaning more clearly, "As the rain is more than the drops, and the fire is greater than the smoke, so the quantity which is past" (the ages during which the world hath endured) "hath more exceeded. But" (some little time must still elapse before the end of the world) "there did still remain the drops and the smoke." Compare xiv. 10—12, where it is said, that out of the twelve ages of the world's duration, ten were passed and the eleventh was passing.

51. "What" ("who," *Margin*). The evidence is divided, the manuscripts of the Latin, the Syriac, and Armenian Versions read "who:" the Æthiopic and Arabic have "what."

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52 He answered me, and said, As for the tokens whereof thou askest me, I may tell thee of them in part: but as touching thy life, I am not sent to shew thee; for I do not know it.

CHAPTER V.

¹ *The signs of the times to come.* ²³ *He asketh why God, choosing but one people, did cast them off.* ³⁰ *He is taught, that God's judgments are unsearchable,* ⁴⁶ *and that God doeth not all at once.*

NEVERTHELESS as concerning the tokens, behold, the days shall come, that they which dwell upon earth ² shall be taken in a great number, and the way of truth shall be hidden, and the land shall be barren of faith.

² Or, shall be found with great wealth.

^a Matt. 24. 12. 2 But ^a iniquity shall be increased above that which now thou seest, or that thou hast heard long ago.

³ Or, that thou treadest upon and seest.

3 And the land, ³ that thou seest now to have root, shalt thou see wasted suddenly.

4 But if the most High grant thee to live, thou shalt see after the third trumpet that the sun shall

52. "As touching thy life." See xiv. 9, 49.

CHAPTER V.

1. "They which dwell upon earth shall be taken in a great number." Read rather, "in great amazement," or "terror." "The earth shall stand in fear with those that dwell therein" (vi. 24. Compare St. Luke xxi. 26.).

1, 2. "The land shall be barren of faith. But iniquity shall be increased" (vv. 10, 11; xiv. 17, 18. Compare St. Matt. xxiv. 12. St. Luke xviii. 8. 2 Tim. iii. 2—4.). In vi. 27, 28, it is predicted that truth and faith should flourish again after God had drawn nigh in the latter days to visit them that dwell on the earth, and to make inquisition for unrighteousness (vi. 18, 19.).

3. "The land which thou seest now to have root." The printed Latin text reads correctly, "to have rule," so that "root" may have arisen from some early misprint in the English Version. "To have rule;" See xi. 5, 6, 32. We seem here to have a brief reference, by anticipation, to the great kingdom described under the figure of the eagle in xi., xii.; the Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom (see xi. 39, 40; xii. 11.) spoken of by Daniel. The writer personates indeed Esdras, and speaks of Babylon (iii. 1.), but he appears to be really thinking of the Roman Empire of his own day; it may well be supposed that he did not think it safe to venture to predict too openly the destruction of the ruling power.

"Shalt thou see wasted suddenly." See xi. 45, 46; xii. 3. The Syriac Version reads, "And that land which thou now seest to bear rule shall be unsettled and untrodden (compare Esth. xiii. 2.), and (men) shall behold that land to be desolate."

4. "Thou shalt see after the third trumpet." "Trumpet" does

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, V.

suddenly shine again in the night, and the moon thrice in the day :

5 and blood shall drop out of wood, and the stone shall give his voice, and the people shall be troubled :

6 and even he shall rule, whom they look not for that dwell upon the earth, and the fowls shall take their flight away together :

7 and the Sodomitish sea shall cast out fish, and make a noise in the night, which many have not known : but they shall all hear the voice thereof.

not occur in any of the Versions except the Latin, and may perhaps have been altered by the scribe, who failed to see the meaning of the passage as it stood, and tried to amend it, so as to make out some resemblance to Rev. viii. 2, 10. The Syriac Version, to which, by a slight alteration, the Latin may be made to conform, reads thus, "Thou shalt see that which is after the third to be troubled;" that is, "that territory, "that kingdom which is after the third,"—the fourth, the Roman Empire, as observed in the preceding *Note* (see xi., xii.), where, with express reference to Dan. vii. 7 (see xi. 39, 40; xii. 11.), there is portrayed the wide dominion and final destruction of this fourth empire.

"And the moon thrice in the day." "Thrice" seems to be merely an error of the Latin transcribers.

5. "And blood shall drop out of wood." In the Epistle which goes under the name of St. Barnabas (chap. xii.), these words form part of a passage which is cited from "another prophet" among the predictions of the Crucifixion. As, however, the rest of the passage is not found here, it may perhaps be questioned whether there is any actual reference to 4 Esdras. If it be a citation, it is one of the few fragments preserved in the original Greek. The Epistle of Barnabas has been thought by many to have been written by the Apostle, but at any rate it is an early work of the beginning of the second century after Christ.

"The stone shall give his voice." Compare Hab. ii. 12. St. Luke xix. 40. *His* voice for "its" (compare below, ver. 9. See iv. 19.).

6. "He shall rule, whom they look not for." The Anointed, the Messiah; the Lion, before whose rebuke the eagle should vanish away; the Christ, by whom the kingdom of oppression should be abolished, and the people of God made joyful (xii. 32—34; xiii. 26—32.).

In the next vision also (vi. 12, 18—28. Compare xiii. 32.), reference is made to these portents and signs, and mention is made of other wonders, as tokens of the coming of the days when God should draw nigh to visit them that dwell upon the earth.

7. "The Sodomitish sea." Josephus (*Antiq.* V. i. 22.) gives the name of the "Sodomitish lake" to the Dead Sea; and the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain, had reached the outer heathen world; thus, Tacitus, writing in the beginning of the second century A.D. (*Hist.* v. 7.), in his well known description of the Dead Sea, speaks of great cities near its shores which had been burned by lightning from heaven.

"Shall cast out fish." Travellers note that the waters of the Dead

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, V.

8 There shall be a confusion also in many places,
² Or, *slaked*. and the fire shall be oft ² sent out again, and the wild
 beasts shall change their places, and menstuous
 women shall bring forth monsters :

9 and salt waters shall be found in the sweet, and
 all friends shall destroy one another ; then shall wit
 hide itself, and understanding withdraw itself into
 his secret chamber,

10 and shall be sought of many, and yet not be
 found : then shall unrighteousness and incontinency
 be multiplied upon earth.

11 One land also shall ask another, and say, Is
 righteousness that maketh a man righteous gone
 through thee? And it shall say, No.

12 At the same time shall men hope, but nothing
 obtain : they shall labour, but their ways shall not
³ prosper.
³ Or, *be direct-*
ed.

13 To shew thee such tokens I have leave ; and if
 thou wilt pray again, and weep as now, and fast
 seven days, thou shalt hear yet greater things.

14 Then I awaked, and an extreme fearfulness

Sea are too salt for fish to live in. See Tristram, *Land of Israel*, xiv. 319,
 324.

9. "Salt waters shall be found in the sweet." St. James also (iii.
 11, 12.) notes this as something monstrous and against nature.

"All friends shall destroy one another." vi. 24. Compare St.
 Mark xiii. 12.

"Then shall wit hide itself." "Wit" is often used by older writers
 in its wider sense of wisdom, intelligence. So "witty" in the sense of
 "wise" (Compare Judith xi. 23. Wisd. viii. 19. Wicliffe, 1 Cor. xiv. 20.).
 "There was never any thing by the *wit* of man so well devised," &c.
 (*Book of Common Prayer*, "Concerning the Service of the Church").
 "Choice wits, after reasonable time spent in contemplation," &c. (Hooker,
Eccles. Pol. V. lxxx. 5, and lxxxi. 16.).

"Understanding withdraw itself into his secret chamber." "His."
 See iv. 19.

10. "Then shall unrighteousness . . . be multiplied." Compare
 vv. 1, 2.

13—20. Esdras awaking from the Vision, faint and
 troubled, is strengthened by the Angel ; and prepares
 himself by Solitude and Fasting for the Second
 Revelation.

13. "Fast seven days." "Fast," compare Dan. ix. 3, "seven days,"
 vv. 20, 21 ; vi. 31, 35.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, V.

went through all my body, and my mind was troubled, so that it fainted.

15 So the angel that was come to talk with me held me, comforted me, and set me up upon my feet.

16 And in the second night it came to pass, that Salathiel the captain of the people came unto me, saying, Where hast thou been? and why is thy countenance so heavy?

17 Knowest thou not that Israel is committed unto thee in the land of their captivity?

18 Up then, and eat bread, and forsake us not, as the shepherd that leaveth his flock in the hands of cruel wolves.

19 Then said I unto him, Go thy ways from me, and come not nigh me. And he heard what I said, and went from me.

20 And so I fasted seven days, mourning and weeping, like as Uriel the angel commanded me.

14. "My mind was troubled, so that it fainted." Compare x. 30; xii. 5; and Dan. vii. 15, 28; viii. 27; x. 8, 16, 17, "I saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength."

15. "Comforted me;" i.e. strengthened me: See on xii. 6. Compare Dan. x. 11, 12, 18, 19.

"Set me up upon my feet;" x. 30. Compare vi. 17; xiv. 2; and Ezek. ii. 2; iii. 24; and Dan. x. 10, 11.

16. "Salathiel." There is some variation in the writing of this name; the Syriac and some manuscripts of the Latin read, Psaltiel; the Æthiopic has Pheltial; the Arabic, Phaldiel. These seem to be intended to represent the name written Phaltiel (the "Redemption of God"), in 2 Sam. iii. 15. Salathiel is the name of the father of Zerubbabel (St. Matt. i. 12. Ezra iii. 2, &c.).

"The captain of the people." Cp. 2 Kin. xx. 5. 1 Sam. ix. 16; x. 1.

16—19. Compare xii. 40—49, at the end of the Fifth Vision.

18. "As the shepherd that leaveth his flock," compare Ezek. xxxiv. 5. St. John x. 12, "in the hands of cruel wolves." Compare St. Matt. x. 16. St. Luke x. 3. "The hands of wolves;" i.e. the power (Ps. xxii. 20; lxxxix. 48, "the hand of the grave." Job v. 20, "the hands of the sword." Is. xlvii. 14, "the hand of the flame").

v. 20—vi. 34. The Second Vision: The ending of the Old World, the coming of the Judgment, and the Kingdom of Righteousness.

20. "So I fasted seven days;" ver. 13; vi. 31. 35. Compare ix. 23, 27.

"Uriel the angel" (iv. 1.). The name is written Hurihel in one

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, V.

21 And after seven days so it was, that the thoughts of my heart were very grievous unto me again,

22 and my soul recovered the spirit of understanding, and I began to talk with the most High again,

23 and said, O Lord that bearest rule, of every wood of the earth, and of all the trees thereof, thou hast chosen thee one only vine :

24 and of all lands of the whole world thou hast chosen thee one pit : and of all the flowers thereof one lily :

25 and of all the depths of the sea thou hast filled thee one river : and of all builded cities thou hast hallowed Sion unto thyself :

26 and of all the fowls that are created thou hast named thee one dove : and of all the cattle that are made thou hast provided thee one sheep :

27 and among all the multitudes of people thou hast gotten thee one people : and unto this people,

very ancient manuscript of the Latin ; the Syriac Version here gives the name as Ramiel (iv. 36.).

21. "The thoughts of my heart were very grievous unto me." Compare vi. 36 ; ix. 27.

"And I began to talk with the most High." Compare iii. 3 ; vi. 36, 37.

23. "O Lord that bearest rule;" ver. 38 ; iii. 4.

23—30. The same thought, more briefly expressed, is found in iv. 23. Esdras pleads with God, as if, in permitting the Gentiles to triumph over the chosen people, He had done that which was wrong and inconsistent with the privileges which He had already assigned to Israel. Similar feelings of perplexity find expression in the Psalms ; for instance, lxxiv., lxxix., lxxx. The humiliation of Israel before the heathen world seems to a Jew to be in contradiction to promises such as those in Is. xlix. 23 ; lx. 12, 14,—promises which Christians apply to the Catholic Church. Compare also vi. 55—59, where the exclusive Jewish feeling finds even stronger utterance than here.

"One only vine." Ps. lxxx. 8—16. Compare Is. v. 1. Jer. ii. 21.

24. "One pit." Compare Is. li. 1. This is the reading of the Latin ; the other versions suggest that the original was "one land."

"One lily." Compare Song of Songs ii. 1, 2.

26. "One dove." Compare Song of Songs ii. 14 ; vi. 9.

"One sheep." Ps. lxxiv. 1 ; lxxix. 13 ; lxxx. 1.

27. "One people." Compare Deut. iv. 20, 34 ; vii. 6. 1 Sam. xii. 22 . . . "whom thou lovedst;" iv. 23 ; vi. 58. Deut. vii. 8 ; xxiii.

5. In Ecclus. xxiv. 11, Jerusalem is called "the beloved city."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, V.

whom thou lovedst, thou gavest a law that is approved of all.

28 And now, O Lord, why hast thou given this one people over unto many? and ²upon the one ²Or, *over*. root hast thou prepared others, and why hast thou scattered thy only one people among many?

29 and they which did gainsay thy promises, and believed not thy covenants, have trodden them down.

30 If thou didst so much hate thy people, yet shouldst thou punish them with thine own hands.

31 Now when I had spoken these words, the angel that came to me the night afore was sent unto me,

32 and said unto me, Hear me, and I will instruct thee; hearken to the thing that I say, and I shall tell thee more.

33 And I said, Speak on, my Lord. Then said he unto me, Thou art sore troubled in mind for Israel's sake: ^blovest thou that people better than ^bch. 8. 47. he that made them?

“Thou gavest a law which is approved by all.” “What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deut. iv. 8.). In Ecclus. xxiv. 8—12, the Eternal Wisdom is represented as taking up His dwelling in Israel.

28. “Why hast thou given this one people over unto many?” iv. 23; vi. 57. Lam. v. 2.

“Upon the one root hast thou prepared others.” Compare Rom. xi. 17.

“One root,” Compare the Book of Enoch the Prophet (see on ii. 19.) xcii. 11, “The house of dominion shall be burned with fire, and all the race of the elect root shall be dispersed.”

“Why hast thou scattered thy only one people among many?” Ps. xlv. 11; lx. 1. Deut. iv. 27; xxviii. 64.

29. More fully expresses the idea conveyed by the words “ungodly nations” in iv. 23.

30. “Yet shouldst thou punish them with thine own hands.” Compare Ecclus. ii. 18, and 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, “Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord . . . and not into the hand of man.”

31. “The angel that came to me the night afore.” Not the night just passed, but the last preceding night on which the angel had appeared, since which time a period of seven days’ fasting (vv. 13, 20, 21.) had elapsed. Compare vi. 12.

32. Compare vii. 49*.

33. “Thou art sore troubled in mind for Israel's sake;” ver. 35. Compare viii. 15, 16; x. 39. Rom. ix. 2—4.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, V.

34 And I said, No, Lord : but of very grief have I spoken : for my reins pain me every hour, while I labour to comprehend the way of the most High, and to seek out part of His judgment.

35 And he said unto me, Thou canst not. And I said, Wherefore, Lord? whereunto was I born then? or why was not my mother's womb then my grave, that I might not have seen the travail of Jacob, and the wearisome toil of the stock of Israel?

36 And he said unto me, Number me the things that are not yet come, gather me together the drops that are scattered abroad, make me the flowers green again that are withered,

37 open me the places that are closed, and bring me forth the winds that in them are shut up, shew me the image of a voice : and then I will

"Lovest thou that people better than he that made them?" Compare viii. 47.

35. "Why was not my mother's womb then my grave?" &c. These words, with those that follow to the end of the verse, are quoted as from "Esdras the Prophet," by an early Christian writer, Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* iii. 16), who died about 220 A.D. This passage, with ver. 5, is another of the fragments preserved in the original Greek. "Why was not my mother's womb my grave?" Compare Jer. xx. 17. Job iii. 11; x. 18, 19.

36—38. Compare iv. 5, where in a similar way Uriel bids Esdras make the vain attempt to perform things seeming impossible.

37. "Open me the places that are closed, and bring me forth the winds that in them are shut up." "Places that are closed," translated "chambers" (iv. 35.), "secret places" (vii. 32, 95*), where, as here also, the writer is speaking of the hidden unseen restingplace of the departed spirits. Our translators, however, by "winds" (following the Latin, so also the Syriac; the word in the Greek would be the same both for "winds" or "spirits,") seem to have understood the passage as intending to refer to certain chambers in which the winds were confined. Our translators may perhaps have had in their minds the passage in the Latin poet Virgil (*Æn.* i. 52—63), who wrote in the time of Augustus, in which he describes the cave of the winds, wherein they are ruled and restrained by their king, lest they burst forth in fury and make desolate the earth. It may be added, that the "receptacle of the winds" is several times spoken of in the Book of Enoch the Prophet (see on ii. 19.). Enoch is taken up to survey "the receptacle of all the winds" (lix.); we read of the "receptacles of light and of thunder" (xviii.), "the receptacle of hail, the receptacle of snow, the receptacle of the clouds" (xli.). "He bringeth the winds out of His treasures" (Ps. cxxxv. 7. Jer. x. 13; li. 16. Deut. xxviii. 12; and below, vi. 40.).

"Shew me the image of a voice." Give visible form to sound.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, V.

declare to thee the thing that thou labourest to know.

38 And I said, O Lord that bearest rule, who may know these things, but he °that hath not ° Dan. 2. 11. his dwelling with men?

39 As for me, I am unwise: how may I then speak of these things whereof thou askest me?

40 Then said he unto me, Like as thou canst do none of these things that I have spoken of, even so canst thou not find out my judgment, or in the end the love that I have promised unto my people.

41 And I said, Behold, O Lord, yet art thou nigh unto them that be reserved till the end: and what shall they do that have been before me, or we that be now, or they that shall come after us?

42 And he said unto me, I will liken my judgment unto a ring: like as there is no slackness of the last, even so there is no swiftness of the first.

From the other Versions, it would seem that before these words there has fallen out from the Latin a clause to this effect, "shew me the faces ° of those whom thou hast not yet seen."

38. "O Lord that bearest rule;" ver. 23; iii. 4.

"He that hath not his dwelling with men." Compare Dan. ii. 11, "The gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

39. "As for me, I am unwise: how may I then speak of these ° things?" Compare Jer. i. 6, "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I ° cannot speak: for I am a child."

40. "Even so canst thou not find out my judgment." Compare Rom. xi. 33. Job xi. 7—9; and above, iv. 9—11.

"In the end the love." The Oriental Versions have, "the end of the ° love;" the final result which My love to My people will bring to pass.

"My judgment . . . the love that I have promised unto my ° people." Here, in the verses which follow, the angel speaks in the person of God. In like manner, Ezra speaks to him as if he were addressing God; for instance, vv. 43, 56.

41. "Yet art thou nigh." "Nigh:" compare Ps. xxxiv. 18; cxlv. 18. "Nigh," the reading of the Latin, is not supported by the other Versions, and the Syriac reads, "Thou hast made Thy promises unto them ° that be reserved unto the end" (compare vii. 28.). What then, asks Ezra, shall become of those who shall die before the coming of the end? The Thessalonians in St. Paul's time seem to have feared that those who had fallen asleep before the coming of Christ, might be at some disadvantage as compared with those who were left alive to behold Him. (1 Thess. iv. 15. Compare xiii. 24, "Know this therefore, that they which ° be left behind are more blessed than they that be dead").

42. "I will liken my judgment unto a ring." The complete and unbroken circle, with the uniform movement of all its parts, is no inapt

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, V.

43 So I answered and said, Coudest thou not make those that have been made, and be now, and that are for to come, at once; that thou mightest shew thy judgment the sooner?

44 Then answered he me, and said, The creature may not haste above the maker; neither may the world hold them at once that shall be created therein.

45 And I said, As thou hast said unto thy servant, that thou, which givest life to all, hast given life at once to the creature that thou hast created, and the creature bare it: even so it might now also bear them that now be present at once.

46 And he said unto me, Ask the womb of a woman, and say unto her, If thou bringest forth children, why dost thou it not together, but one after another? pray her therefore to bring forth ten children at once.

47 And I said, She cannot: but must do it by distance of time.

48 Then said he unto me, Even so have I given the womb of the earth to those that be sown in it in their times.

emblem of the eternal scheme of God's providential ordering of all things from the beginning to the end. This passage is quoted with admiration, as Scripture, by St. Ambrose (*De Bono Mortis*, x.), Bishop of Milan, who died A.D. 397.

44. "The creature may not haste above the maker." See iv. 34; vi. 34. "Men are impatient, and for precipitating things; but the Author "of Nature appears deliberate throughout his operations, accomplishing "his natural ends by slow successive steps" (*Butler's Analogy*, ii., iv.).

45. The meaning of the verse is not clear, and the Versions vary. "As thou hast said unto thy servant." The reference would seem to be to ver. 42.

"Thou . . . hast given life." The Syriac and Æthiopic Versions read, "Thou wilt give life."

"And the creature bare it." The Syriac Version, and the best manuscripts of the Latin, have the future, "will bear;" that is, "Since then, "at some time or other, the earth will have to bear those whom Thou "hast determined to create, why might it not bear them all at once; that "so there might be a hastening of Thy judgment?" (ver. 43.).

46. "If thou bringest forth children." The Oriental Versions, and the best manuscripts of the Latin, insert "ten," so that in the last clause we may render, "the ten at once." "Ten," as in Gen. xxxi. 7, 41. Num. xiv. 22. Neh. iv. 12. Dan. vii. 7, &c., put generally for any large number.

48. "The womb of the earth." Compare Job i. 21. Eccles. xl. 1, "the mother of all things." Compare ver. 50, and x. 10—14. "Thy mother earth" (Pope, *Essay on Man*, i. 39.).

II. (IV). ESDRAS, V.

49 For like as a young child may not bring forth the things that belong to the aged, even so have I disposed the world which I created.

50 And I asked, and said, Seeing thou hast now given me the way, I will *proceed* to speak before thee: for our mother, of whom thou hast told me that she is young, draweth now nigh unto age.

51 He answered me, and said, Ask a woman that beareth children, and she shall tell thee.

52 Say unto her, Wherefore are not they whom thou hast now brought forth like those that were before, but less of stature?

49. "The things that belong to the aged." Read rather, with the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Armenian Versions, and the best manuscripts of the Latin, "nor she that hath grown old;" i.e. can any more bring forth.

50. "Our mother, of whom thou hast now told me that she is young." Read rather, with the Syriac, "Is our mother, of whom thou hast spoken 'unto me' (ver. 48), 'still young, or draweth she now nigh unto age?'"

50—55. St. Ambrose (*De Bono Mortis*, x. See above, ver. 42) refers to these verses, and gives the substance of them, observing that Esdras has compared the births of this world to the womb of a woman, since those are stronger who are born in the season of youthful vigour, but weaker those who are born in the time of old age (ver. 53.). The same thought occurs again in xiv. 10, 17, "The world hath lost his youth, and 'the times begin to wax old;" and is found in other writers, as, for instance, in the Roman poet Lucretius (ii. 1149), who died about fifty years before the Christian era, and Horace (*Od.* III., vi. 46), who died in the time of Augustus, shortly before the birth of our Lord. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, writing in those times of pestilence and trouble, in which, as observed in the *Note* on xv., xvi., the world was suffering in the middle of the third century after Christ, defends the Christians against the charge of being the authors of those calamities through their neglect of the worship of the heathen deities, by urging, in words which have some resemblance to these places in 4 Esdras, that such misfortunes were things which might naturally be expected in an age when the world was growing old, and was no longer possessed of the vigour and strength which in former days it had enjoyed. The passage is of some length, and not without eloquence, dwelling in detail on the signs of decay. Christians needed not to cite proofs from Holy Scripture, when the world itself in its visible feebleness bore its own witness that it was tottering to its fall. Nothing was as it once had been; the winter rains were less abundant to nourish the seed, the summer suns less warm to ripen the grain; the quarries and the mines yielded less than of old; the fountains of water were shrinking through age. All things were failing everywhere,—the husbandman in the fields, the sailor on the sea, the soldier in the camp, fair dealing in the market-place, justice on the judgment-seat: in friendship concord, in arts skilfulness, in morals old-fashioned strictness was dying out (*To Demetrianus*, near the beginning, p. 186, ed. Fell.).

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

53 And she shall answer thee, They that be born in the strength of youth are of one fashion, and they that are born in the time of age, when the womb faileth, are otherwise.

54 Consider thou therefore also, how that ye are less of stature than those that were before you.

55 And so are they that come after you less than ye, as the creatures which now begin to be old, and have passed over the strength of youth.

56 Then said I, Lord, I beseech thee, if I have found favour in thy sight, shew thy servant by whom thou visitest thy creature.

CHAPTER VI.

1 God's purpose is eternal. 8 The next world shall follow this immediately. 13 What shall fall out at the last. 31 He is promised more knowledge, 38 and reckoneth up the works of the creation, 57 and complaineth that they have no part in the world for whom it was made.

² Or, circle of the earth. **A**ND he said unto me, In the beginning, when the ² earth was made, before the borders of the world stood, or ever the winds blew,

55. "Begin to be old, and have passed over the strength of youth." We may make application of the words, "Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. viii. 13. See below, vi. 20.).

56. "If I have found favour in thy sight." Compare vi. 11; vii. 75*, 102*; viii. 42; xii. 7; xiv. 22. The expression is a very frequent one; for instance, Gen. xviii. 3; xxx. 27; xxxix. 4. Num. xi. 15. Ruth. ii. 2, 10. 1 Sam. xx. 29. Neh. ii. 5. Esth. ii. 17; v. 8; vii. 3; viii. 5.

"Thou visitest thy creature." Compare vi. 18; ix. 2.

CHAPTER VI.

1. The Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic Versions here insert a sentence omitted in the Latin, in which a direct answer is given to the question which Esdras has asked (v. 56.), "Shew thy servant by whom thou visitest thy creature?" "And he answered and said unto me, In the beginning by the Son of Man, and afterwards by myself; for before the world was created . . . I did consider these things (ver. 6.)." The translator of the Armenian Version has here added a long note or disquisition of his own; and, in answer to the question, "How shall the Most High come, and when shall his Advent be?" details that after a little while He should first come in the form of man; that He should be denied and evil entreated; that when impieties were multiplied and seducing spirits were leading men astray, the Most High should come in glory and reign, and requite to the holy their holiness, and to the impious their impiety.

1, 2. The original has greater amplitude of expression; thus, for "winds" it has "the gatherings together of the winds;" for "it thundered and

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

2 before it thundered and lightened, or ever the foundations of paradise were laid,

3 before the fair flowers were seen, or ever the moveable powers were established, before the innumerable multitude of angels were gathered together,

4 or ever the heights of the air were lifted up, before the measures of the firmament were named, or ever the chimneys in Sion were hot,

5 and ere the present years were sought out, and or ever the inventions of them that now sin were turned, before they were sealed that have gathered faith for a treasure :

6 then did I consider these things, and they all were made through me alone, and through none other : by me also they shall be ended, and by none other.

7 Then answered I and said, What shall be the parting asunder of the times ? or when shall be the

“lightened,” “before there did sound the voices of the thunders, and “before there did shine the radiances of the lightnings.”

3. “The moveable powers.” “The powers of the earthquakes;” or, taking it more generally, the forces of nature which bring about changes and convulsions on the earth,—earthquakes, upheavings, subsidences, storms, frosts, floods.

“Multitude of angels.” Literally, hosts, armies of angels (Gen. xxxii. 12. Ps. xxxiv. 7. St. Matt. xxvi. 53. St. Luke ii. 13.).

4. “Or ever the chimnies in Sion were hot.” This is without meaning. The Syriac Version has, “before there was firmly set the “footstool” (God’s footstool) “Sion.” The Temple is spoken of as God’s footstool (1 Chr. xxviii. 2. Ps. cxxxii. 7; xcix. 5.). Compare Lam. ii. 1, “How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Sion with a cloud . . . and cast down his footstool in the day of his anger!” The Arabic reads, “before there were laid the foundations of Sion.” The Armenian paraphrase gives merely, “the foundation of the earth” (compare Ps. civ. 5. Job xxxviii. 4.). The Æthiopic Version omits the words altogether.

5. “Were turned.” That is, were turned away from God and from good.

“Were sealed.” Compare Rev. vii. 3, 4. Eph. i. 13; iv. 30. 2 Cor. i. 22.

6. Compare with vv. 1—6, Prov. viii. 23—30.

“In the beginning . . . then did I consider these things.” Compare Acts xv. 18, according to the reading followed in the English translation, “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the “world.”

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

end of the first, and the beginning of it that followeth?

8 And he said unto me, From Abraham unto Isaac, ^a Gen. 25. 26. when Jacob and Esau were born of him, ^a Jacob's hand held ² first the heel of Esau.

² Or, *from the beginning.*

9 For Esau is the end of the world, and Jacob is the beginning of it that followeth.

10 The hand of man is betwixt the heel and the hand: other question, Esdras, ask thou not.

11 I answered then and said, O Lord that bearest rule, if I have found favour in thy sight,

12 I beseech thee, shew thy servant the end of thy tokens, whereof thou shewedst me part the last night.

13 So he answered and said unto me, Stand up upon thy feet, and hear a mighty sounding voice.

³ Or, *earth-quake.*

14 And it shall be as it were a great ³ motion; but the place where thou standest shall not be moved.

8—10. This passage is obscure, and has become corrupted in transcribing. The Versions vary; but the general meaning appears to be, that, in reply to the question (ver. 7) whether any long interval should part asunder the present age or period from the times that should come, the answer is given, that, like as Jacob took hold on the heel of Esau, and came into the world immediately after him (Gen. xxv. 26.), so the new world, the world "that followeth," should follow close upon the end of the old or "the first" world.

9. "The end of the world." Compare ver. 25. The Latin has, "the end of this world."

11. "O Lord that bearest rule;" iv. 3.

"If I have found favour in thy sight;" v. 56; vii. 102*; viii. 42.

12. "Shew thy servant the end of thy tokens, whereof thou shewedst me part the last night." "Last:" in the Latin, "the preceding night;" not the night immediately preceding, but the last night (since which seven days had passed, v. 13, 20, 21.) on which, before Esdras awaked (v. 14), God had spoken to him in vision. See v. 31.

"Thy tokens, whereof thou shewedst me part;" iv. 52; v. 1, 4—13. Compare vii. 26.

13. "Stand up upon thy feet;" ver 17. Compare v. 15. Dan. viii. 18; x. 11. Ezek. ii. 2.

"And hear a mighty sounding voice." See ver. 17. Compare Dan. x. 6.

14—16. The Latin text is somewhat corrupted, and the meaning is clearer in the Oriental Versions, "And although it shall be that the place whereon thou standest shall be greatly moved when I speak with thee, be not thou afraid, for (My) word is concerning the end; and the foundations of the earth shall understand the word, for the discourse is

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

15 And therefore when it speaketh be not afraid : for the word is of the end, and the foundation of the earth is understood.

16 And why? because the speech of these things trembleth and is moved : for it knoweth that the end of these things must be changed.

17 And it happened, that when I had heard it I stood up upon my feet, and hearkened, and, behold, there was a voice that spake, and the sound of it was like the sound of many waters.

18 And it said, Behold, the days come, that I will begin to draw nigh, and to visit them that dwell upon the earth,

19 and will begin to make inquisition of them, what they be that have hurt unjustly with their unrighteousness, and when the affliction of Sion shall be fulfilled ;

20 and when the world, that shall begin to vanish away, shall be ²finished, then will I shew these ² Or, *sealed*. tokens : the books shall be opened before the firmament, and they shall see all together :

21 and the children of a year old shall speak with their voices, the women with child shall bring forth untimely children of three or four months old, and they shall live, and be raised up.

“concerning them, and they shall tremble and be moved.” “The foundations of the earth shall understand the word :” the sentence which decrees its dissolution. Compare 2 Pet. iii. 10.

16. “It knoweth that the end of these things must be changed.” Well paraphrased in the Arabic, “because they” (the foundations of the earth) “know that their form shall be changed, and they shall have an “end.” Compare Ps. cii. 26. Heb. i. 11, 12.

17. “I stood upon my feet ;” xiv. 2 ; x. 30. See ver. 13.

“A voice that spake, and the sound of it was like the sound of “many waters ;” ver. 13. Compare Ezek. i. 24 ; xliii. 2. Rev. i. 15 ; xiv. 2 ; xix. 6.

18. “I will begin to draw nigh” (compare Mal. iii. 5.) “to visit “them that dwell upon the earth ;” v. 56 ; ix. 2. Compare Is. xxvi. 21. Exod. xxxii. 34. Jer. v. 9, 29 ; ix. 9 ; xiv. 10 ; xxiii. 2.

19. “When the affliction of Sion shall be fulfilled.” Compare Is. xl. 2.

20. “The books shall be opened.” Rev. xx. 12 ; and Dan. vii. 10.

“They shall see all together.” What shall they see? Perhaps we should supply, “the things written in the open books ; the deeds of all “men laid bare.” The Syriac supplies, “Shall see My judgment ;” the Æthiopic, “Shall see Me.” Compare Is. xl. 5.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

22 And suddenly shall the sown places appear unsown, the full storehouses shall suddenly be found empty :

23 and ^b the trumpet shall give a sound, which when every man heareth, they shall be suddenly afraid.

24 At that time shall friends fight one against another like enemies, and the earth shall stand in fear with those that dwell therein, the springs of the fountains shall stand still, and in three hours they shall not run.

25 Whosoever remaineth from all these that I have told thee shall escape, and see my salvation, and the end of your world.

26 And the men that are received shall see it, who have not tasted death from their birth : and the heart of the inhabitants shall be changed, and turned into another meaning.

23. "The trumpet shall give a sound." 1 Cor. xv. 52. St. Matt. xxiv. 31. 1 Thess. iv. 16. The resemblance of these passages to the places referred to in the Revelation of St. John (xx. 12.), the Gospel of St. Matthew, and St. Paul's Epistles, is very remarkable, if we are to suppose that this book was written in the century before the Christian Birth of Christ, and that these words are not recollections of wellknown texts of the New Testament. See *Introduction*.

24. "At that time shall friends fight one against another." Compare v. 9.

"The earth shall stand in fear with those that dwell therein." See v. 1. Compare St. Matt. xxiv. 30.

"Three hours." In Rev. viii. 1 ("half an hour"), we have a somewhat similar way of expressing an indefinite period.

25. "Whosoever remaineth;" vii. 28; xiii. 16—24, 26, 48. 1 Thess. iv. 15, "we which are alive and remain."

"From all these evils." Compare vii. 27.

"Shall see my salvation;" vii. 27; ix. 8. Compare Is. lii. 10 (St. Luke iii. 6.). St. Luke ii. 30.

"And the end of your world" (ver. 9.). The manuscripts of the Latin read, "the end of My world;" this is also the reading of the Æthiopic Version. The other versions have, "the end of the world," or, "the end of this world."

26. "And the men that are received shall see it." Read rather, "And shall see the men who have been received up (into heaven), who have not tasted death from their birth." Enoch (Gen. v. 24. Ecclus. xlv. 16; xlix. 14. Heb. xi. 5.) and Elijah (2 Kin. ii. Ecclus. xlviii. 9.) shall then be seen again upon the earth; to whom is added Esdras, who also like them was "taken up." See xiv. 9; viii. 19; and the subscription at the end of the book, chap. xiv. 49.

"Tasted death." St. Matt. xvi. 28. St. John viii. 52. Heb. ii. 9.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

27 For evil shall be put out, and deceit shall be quenched.

28 As for faith, it shall flourish, corruption shall be overcome, and the truth, which hath been so long without fruit, shall be declared.

29 And when he talked with me, behold, I looked by little and little upon him before whom I stood.

30 And these words said he unto me; I am come to shew thee the time of the night to come.

31 If thou wilt pray yet more, and fast seven days again, I shall tell thee greater things ² by ² See ch. 13. 52.

32 For thy voice is heard before the most High: for the Mighty hath seen thy righteous dealing, he hath seen also thy chastity, which thou hast had ever since thy youth.

27. "The heart of the inhabitants shall be changed . . . evil shall be "put out." The writer frequently speaks of the wickedness of the heart of man; for instance, iii. 20, 21, 26; iv. 4; vii. 48*, 68*; ix. 19. There may also be a reference to the coming of Elijah (ver. 26.) in the latter days, to turn the hearts of the people. See Mal. iv. 5, 6. St. Matt. xvii. 10.

"Evil shall be put out, deceit shall be quenched." See viii. 53.

27, 28. In v. 1, 2, 9—11, there is given a prediction of the wickedness which should prevail in the times preceding the days when God should visit the earth (ver. 18.). Compare vii. 31, 34, 113, 114 (43, 44), "Corruption is past . . . truth is sprung up." See also xvi. 52 (5 Esdras).

29. "I looked by little and little upon him." The four Oriental Versions read, "Behold, little by little the place was moved upon which I stood before him." Compare ver. 14. Is. vi. 4.

30. "I am come to shew thee the time of the night to come." The meaning is obscure, and the reading uncertain. The Syriac Version has, "I am come to shew thee these things in this night:" it is not, however, till the eighth night that the angel comes again to visit Esdras (ver. 36; vii. 1.). The Æthiopic Version has, "I am come to speak unto thee, as in the past night" (ver. 12.).

31. "Fast seven days;" ver. 35; v. 13, 20, "seven days;" ix. 23; xii. 39, 51.

"Greater things by day than I have heard." The Latin Version is corrupt here; the Syriac Version, supported by the Æthiopic, preserves the true reading, "Thou shalt hear greater things than these, for thy voice hath been surely heard before the Most High."

"Greater things." Compare xiii. 56.

32. "Thy voice is heard." Dan. x. 12.

"The Mighty hath seen thy righteous dealing," &c. The passage is an imitation of Dan. ix. 23; x. 11. "Esdras" frequently brings in these commendations of himself (vii. 77*; viii. 48; x. 39, 57, 59; xii. 9, 36; xiii. 54, 56.).

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

33 And therefore hath he sent me to shew thee all these things, and to say unto thee, Be of good comfort, and fear not.

34 And hasten not with the times that are past, to think vain things, that thou mayest not hasten from the latter times.

35 And it came to pass after this, that I wept again, and fasted seven days in like manner, that I might fulfil the three weeks which he told me.

36 And in the eighth night was my heart vexed within me again, and I began to speak before the most High.

37 For my spirit was greatly set on fire, and my soul was in distress.

38 And I said, O Lord, thou spakest from the beginning of the creation, even the first day, and

33. "He hath sent me to shew thee all these things . . . fear not." Compare Dan. ix. 23; x. 11, 12, 19.

34. "And hasten not with the times that are past," &c. "Hasten not" (iv. 34; v. 44.). The rest of the verse is somewhat difficult: taking it as it stands here, it would seem to say, "Be not too hasty and impatient in thy judgment concerning things in the times that are past, lest thou be led into vain and rash judgments and actions concerning the things of the latter times." The translators in the various Versions found the verse obscure, and have rendered it in different ways: the Arabic Version has, "Let not thy heart be troubled on account of the times that are past, neither do thou nourish vain thoughts in desiring the hastening of the end."

vi. 35—ix. 25. The Third Vision: God's Final Judgment and the Justice thereof.

vi. 38—59. Esdras asketh the Lord, who made the World, concerning the affliction of Israel, for whose sake the World was made.

35. "Fasted seven days" (ver. 31. Compare v. 13, 20.). . . . "that I might fulfil the three weeks" (Dan. x. 2, 3.). Only two periods of fasting for seven days have been hitherto specified: one at the end of the first vision, as a preparation for the second (v. 13, 20); and the other at the end of the second vision, and before the third (vi. 31, 35. See also ix. 23.).

36. "My heart vexed within me" (v. 21; ix. 27.), . . . "and I began to speak" (iii. 3; v. 22; ix. 28.).

37, 38. "My spirit was greatly set on fire . . . And I said." Compare Ps. xxxix. 3, "My heart was hot within me . . . then spake I with my tongue."

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saidst thus; ° Let heaven and earth be made; and ° Gen. 1. 1. thy word was a perfect work.

39 And then was the spirit, and darkness and silence were on every side; the sound of man's voice was not yet formed.

40 ° Then commandedst thou a fair light to come ° Gen. 1. 3. forth of thy treasures, that thy work might appear.

41 ° Upon the second day thou madest the spirit ° Gen. 1. 6. of the firmament, and commandedst it to part asunder, and to make a division betwixt the waters, that the one part might go up, and the other remain beneath.

42 ° Upon the third day thou didst command that ° Gen. 1. 9. the waters should be gathered in the seventh part of the earth: six parts hast thou dried up, and kept them, to the intent that of these some being planted for God and tilled might serve thee.

43 For as soon as thy word went forth the work was made.

39. "And then was the spirit." The best Latin manuscripts add "flying," and this is supported by the Syriac Version, "moving itself around." "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 2.).

"Darkness." Gen. i. 2. "Silence." See vii. 30.

40. "Thy treasures." Compare Job xxxviii. 22. "He bringeth the wind out of His treasures" (Ps. cxxxv. 7. Jer. x. 13; li. 16; above, v. 37).

41. "Thou madest the spirit of the firmament." St. Ambrose, in his treatise on the Holy Spirit (ii., vi., *al.* vii.), quotes this verse, as brought forward by those who would argue that the Holy Ghost was a created being. It is evident, says St. Ambrose, that here, as in Amos iv. 13, the wind, the air, is spoken of. Though Esdras does, no doubt, by "the spirit of the firmament," mean no more than the air of heaven, the atmosphere, yet it may be observed that the author of the Book of Enoch the Prophet (see on ii. 19) uses "spirit" in the sense of the intelligent power, or angel or genius directing each operation of Nature. Thus, we read of the winds being "numbered according to the force of their spirit;" of the spirits of the thunder and lightning, who restrain them with a bridle and turn them by their power; of "the spirit of the sea," potent and strong; of "the spirit of the frost;" of "the spirit of hail," wherein there is "a good angel;" of "the spirit of snow," in which is "a solitary spirit, which ascends from it like vapour;" of "the spirit of mist," "the spirit of dew" (chap. lix., translated from the *Æthiopic* by Archbishop Laurence).

42. "The waters should be gathered in the seventh part of the earth." So vv. 47, 52. The vast oceans explored in later times were unknown to the ancients. The seas cover about three-quarters of the surface of the globe.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

44 For immediately there was great and innumerable fruit, and many and divers pleasures for the taste, and flowers of unchangeable colour, and odours of wonderful smell: and this was done the third day.

^g Gen. i. 14. 45 ^g Upon the fourth day thou commandedst that the sun should shine, and the moon give her light, and the stars should be in order:

^h Gen. i. 15.
Deut. i. 19. 46 and gavest them a charge to do ^h service unto man, that was to be made.

ⁱ Gen. i. 20. 47 Upon the fifth day thou saidst unto the seventh part, ⁱ where the waters were gathered, that it should bring forth living creatures, fowls and fishes: and so it came to pass.

48 For the dumb water and without life brought forth living things at the commandment of God, that all people might praise thy wondrous works.

² Behemoth. 49 Then didst thou ordain two living creatures, the one thou calledst ² Enoch, and the other Leviathan;

44. "And many and divers pleasures for the taste." The other versions suggest that these words refer to the fruits, "of many and "divers pleasures to the taste."

"Of unchangeable colour." The best manuscripts of the Latin have "inimitable." The other versions also add, "trees manifold in "their kind."

47. "That it should bring forth." According to the English version of Gen. i. 20, following the old Greek and Latin Versions, the fowls are said to have been produced from the waters. But the Hebrew does not say this (see the correction in the *Margin* of Gen. i. 20.); according to Gen. ii. 19, the Lord God formed out of the ground every fowl of the air.

49, 51. "Enoch." The Syriac and Æthiopic Versions read "Behemoth," which is doubtless the true reading (see the *Margin*).

"Leviathan." The behemoth and leviathan of Job (xl. 15—xli. 34.) are real animals, the hippopotamus and crocodile; but the behemoth and leviathan here spoken of are the fabulous monsters concerning which there are strange Talmudical stories. They were creatures of portentous size and strength, male and female, created on the fifth day; if they had come together and produced offspring, they would have laid waste the whole earth. But the holy and blessed God mutilated the male, and, slaying the female, caused the body to be salted and preserved against the great feast of rejoicing with which the righteous are to entertain the Messiah at His coming. To this feast allusion is made in ver. 52. In the Book of Enoch the Prophet, chap. lviii. (see on ii. 19.), we find mention made of these two creatures, behemoth and leviathan. When Enoch has fallen down in terror before a vision of the Ancient

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50 and didst separate the one from the other : for the seventh part, namely, where the water was gathered together, might not hold them both.

51 Unto Enoch thou gavest one part, which was dried up the third day, that he should dwell in the same part, wherein are a thousand hills :

52 but unto Leviathan thou gavest the seventh part, namely, the moist ; and hast kept him to be devoured of whom thou wilt, and when.

53 ^k Upon the sixth day thou gavest command- ^k Gen. 1. 24. ment unto the earth, that before thee it should bring forth beasts, cattle, and creeping things :

54 ^l and after these, Adam also, whom thou madest ^l Gen. 1. 26. lord of all thy creatures : of him come we all, and the people also whom thou hast chosen.

55 All this have I spoken before thee, O Lord, because thou madest the world for our sakes.

56 As for the other people, which also come of

of Days on the throne of His glory, the angel Michael is sent to comfort him and tell him of the coming of the day of power and judgment. "In that day shall be distributed for food two monsters,—a female "monster whose name is leviathan, dwelling in the depths of the sea, "above the springs of water, and a male monster whose name is behemoth . . . in the dry desert. These two monsters are, by the power "of God, prepared to become food, that the punishment of God may not "be in vain" (translated from the Æthiopic by Archbishop Laurence). The Arabic and Armenian Versions omit this passage about behemoth and leviathan as foolish and unedifying.

50. "The seventh part, namely, where the water was gathered "together." See ver. 42.

51. "Unto Behemoth" (Enoch, text) "thou gavest one part." This "one part," the dry land, included the other six parts of the surface of the earth (ver. 42). "A thousand hills;" Ps. l. 10.

52. "And hast kept him to be devoured of whom thou wilt, and "when." In allusion to the feast at the coming of the Messiah (see the Talmudical tales referred to in the *Note* above). "Hast kept him." The Latin (printed text and manuscripts) reads, "her;" the Syriac and Æthiopic, "them."

53, 54. "Thou gavest commandment unto the earth, that before "thee it should bring forth . . . Adam also." Compare iii. 4 (see *Note*). "Thou commandedst the dust," &c. Compare vii. 116 (46.), *Note*; x. 14.

54. "Adam . . . whom thou madest lord of all thy creatures." Wisd. ix. 2; x. 2. Ps. viii. 6. Gen. i. 26, 28.

"The people whom thou hast chosen." See v. 23—27. Esth. xvi. 21.

55, 59. "Thou madest the world for our sakes;" vii. 11.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VI.

Adam, thou hast said that they are nothing, but be like unto spittle: and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel.

57 And now, O Lord, behold, these heathen, which have ever been reputed as nothing, have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us.

58 But we thy people, whom thou hast called thy firstborn, thy only begotten, and thy fervent lover, are given into their hands.

59 If the world now be made for our sakes, why do we not possess an inheritance with the world? how long shall this endure?

CHAPTER VII.

4 The way is narrow. 12 When it was made narrow. 28 All shall die, and rise again. 33 Christ shall sit in judgment. 46 God hath not made paradise in vain, 62 and is merciful.

56. "Thou hast said that they are nothing." Is. xl. 17. Dan. iv. 35. "A drop that falleth from a vessel." "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket" (Is. xl. 15.).

57. "These heathen, which have ever been reputed as nothing." Compare Esth. xiv. 11, "O Lord, give not thy sceptre unto them that be nothing." Compare 1 Cor. i. 28.

"These heathen . . . have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us." Compare Ps. lxxix., "O God, the heathen are come unto thine inheritance." "To be lords over us." "They that hated them were lords over them" (Ps. cvi. 40, Prayer-Book version. Lev. xxvi. 17.). With these utterances of strong Jewish feeling, vv. 55—59, compare v. 23—30. See also Rom. ix. 4. Contrast 2 Esdr. i. 33, 35; ii. 10, 33, 34.

58. "We thy people, whom thou hast called thy firstborn." Exod. iv. 22. Hos. xi. 1. Jer. xxxi. 9. Eccus. xxxvi. 12.

"Thy only begotten," and therefore most dearly loved. Compare Gen. xxii. 2. Heb. xi. 17. Judg. xi. 34. Zech. xii. 10. St. Luke vii. 12; viii. 42; ix. 38. Prov. iv. 3. Ps. xxii. 20; xxxv. 17, "my darling." Probably the writer uses the word in this secondary meaning, unless we suppose that, although the writer had already spoken of the common descent of all men from Adam (ver. 56), yet advancing onwards in setting forth the prerogatives of Israel, he would say that not only was the chosen people the "firstborn," and so head and chief of all the nations, the "inheritance" of God, the people for whose sake the world was made (vv. 55, 59); but that the heathen were so absolutely to be left out of account, so completely to be considered as "nothing" (ver. 57), so unworthy to be counted as God's children at all, that Israel might be really called, not only "the sons of God" (Wisd. xviii. 13), His "firstborn" (Eccus. xxxvi. 12), but His "only begotten," His only sons.

59. "An inheritance with the world." The Latin manuscripts have "our inheritance;" and the other Versions suggest that the original was, "Why do not we possess our inheritance, the world?" "Inheritance." See vii. 9, 10.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VII.

AND when I had made an end of speaking these words, there was sent unto me the angel which had been sent unto me the nights afore :

2 and he said unto me, Up, Esdras, and hear the words that I am come to tell thee.

3 And I said, Speak on, my God. Then said he unto me, The sea is set in a wide place, that it might be deep and great.

4 But put the case the entrance were narrow, and like a river ;

5 who then could go into the sea to look upon it, and to rule it? if he went not through the narrow, how could he come into the broad?

6 There is also another thing ; A city is builded, and set upon a broad field, and is full of all good things :

7 the entrance thereof is narrow, and is set in a
2 dangerous place to fall, like as if there were a fire ^{2 Or, steep place.}
on the right hand, and on the left a deep water :

CHAPTER VII.

1—18. The Angel bringeth to Esdras the Answer to his Petition. Israel doth now Suffer, that through the Narrow Way the Righteous may Enter into their Inheritance.

1. "Then was sent unto me the angel;" iv. 1; v. 13, 20, 31. "The angel which shewed me these things;" Rev. xxii. 8.

"The nights afore;" v. 31; vi. 12.

3. "Speak on, my God." The reading of the other versions, and of the manuscripts of the Latin, is "my Lord" (v. 33; x. 34, *Note*). The printed text of the Latin has "my God," as though Esdras were addressing, not directly the angel, but through him the Deity, whose messenger he was. Compare *Note* on v. 40.

"Deep and great." In giving "deep," our translators may have followed the alteration of Junius (see on xiii. 2). The Latin has "broad" and "boundless."

5. "To rule it." To make it subject to his use and enjoyment, so as freely to pass to and fro upon it.

6. "There is also another thing;" i.e. "Hear again another parable."

"A city is . . . set upon a broad field;" i.e. in a wide, open plain. "Field," though now used to mean a comparatively small enclosed space, was formerly used of the unenclosed land reaching up to the wide, open down.

7. "The entrance thereof is narrow." Compare "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life," St. Matt. vii. 14.

7, 8. "A fire . . . a deep water." For "fire" and "water," em-

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VII.

8 and one only path between them both, even between the fire and the water, *so small* that there could but one man go there at once.

9 If this city now were given unto a man for an inheritance, if he never shall pass the danger set before it, how shall he receive this inheritance?

10 And I said, It is so, Lord. Then said he unto me, Even so also is Israel's portion.

11 Because for their sakes I made the world: and when Adam transgressed my statutes, then was decreed that now is done.

12 Then were the entrances of this world made

played as emblems of difficulty and suffering, compare Ps. lxvi. 12. Is. xliii. 2.

7—9. Compare the vision which St. Perpetua (March 7, *Prayer-Book Calendar*; martyred A.D. 203.) is related to have seen in her dream in the prison, of the golden ladder reaching from earth to heaven,—the ladder very narrow, so beset with sharp knives and hooks as to need, in mounting, very wary footsteps; and guarded at the bottom by a dragon great and terrible, but whose head was made to serve to the brave and resolute climber as the first step in the ascent to the wide and fair garden at the top. This dream of the dragon and the ladder, related in the *Acts of St. Perpetua*, is referred to by St. Augustine, *Serm.* 280, § 1.

9. "An inheritance." See vi. 59.

"The danger set before it;" or rather, perhaps, "the danger set before him." Compare Acts xiv. 22, "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

"This inheritance." The translation varies needlessly from the Latin printed text, which has correctly "his inheritance."

10. "So is Israel's portion." See vv. 16—18. These words are in answer to those perplexities of Esdras which find expression in vi. 55—59. Israel now suffered persecutions and troubles (vi. 19.), as a preparation for the better world; was made to pass through the "strait things," in order to enter into the "wide." Contrast, for instance, 2 Macc. vi. 30; vii. 14, 36. The Jews in later times had generally a clearer and more distinct view of the future life (see xiv. 35.) than the Jews in the earlier periods of their history. Compare, e.g., Is. xxxviii. 18. Ps. lxxxviii. 10—12. Ecclus. xvii. 27, 28. As all hope of restoring the earthly kingdom to Israel (Acts i. 6.) seemed to the writer to have passed away, he looks forward to the inheritance in the world to come. The direct sanctions of the Law are temporal, and its express promises and threatenings relate to this life (e.g. Lev. xxvi. Deut. xxviii.).

11. "For their sakes I made the world;" vi. 55, 59.

"When Adam transgressed my statutes;" iii. 7.

12. "Then were the entrances of this world made narrow, full of sorrow and travail." "Entrances" would here seem to be used to denote the paths or lots of men after they have entered into the world; the Æthiopic Version has "paths," "ways;" unless we prefer

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narrow, full of sorrow and travail: they are but few and evil, full of perils, and very painful.

13 For the entrances of the ² elder world were wide ² Or, *greater*. and sure, and brought immortal fruit.

14 If then they that live labour not to enter these strait and vain things, they can never receive those that are laid up for them.

15 Now therefore why disquietest thou thyself, seeing thou art but a corruptible man? and why art thou moved, whereas thou art but mortal?

16 Why hast thou not considered in thy mind this thing that is to come, rather than that which is present?

17 Then answered I and said, O Lord that bearest rule, thou hast ordained in thy ^a law, that the ^a Deut. 8. 1. righteous should inherit these things, but that the ungodly should perish.

18 Nevertheless the righteous shall suffer strait things, and hope for wide: for they that have done wickedly have suffered the strait things, and yet shall not see the wide.

to take the words "of this world" as the descriptive or adjectival genitive: "the entrances (into the world to come) which are in this world." Man passes through this world, made "narrow" and full of sadness, in order to enter into the better and wider world.

"Full of sorrow and travail." Compare Ecclus. xl. 1. Rom. viii. 18—23.

"Few and evil." Compare Gen. xlvii. 9.

13. "The elder world." The Latin has, "the greater" (that is, the better) "world;" the Syriac Version has, "the future world;" the Æthiopic, "that world." Compare St. Luke xx. 35.

"Were wide . . . brought . . . fruit." Read rather, "are wide and sure, and bring immortal fruits." "Wide;" Compare Rom. viii. 21, "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

"Immortal fruit;" ver. 123 (53), "whose fruit endureth for ever."

14. The interpretation of the previous parables. Compare vv. 5, 9.

15. "Why disquietest thou thyself?" Compare vi. 37.

16. Why dost thou not think more upon the perfection of the future world, rather than dwell so much upon the seeming perplexities and inconsistencies in this present world? Compare vii. 50*; viii. 46.

17. "O Lord that bearest rule" (iii. 4) . . . "the righteous should inherit these things." Compare St. Matt. xxv. 34.

18. "Suffer strait things, and hope for wide." Compare 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. "Strait," "wide;" vv. 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 13, 96*. By a common figure, wide or large stands as the emblem of that state wherein is found ease and freedom; while by strait, or narrow, is denoted that which is laborious, inconvenient, difficult, or troublesome. The figure

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19 And he said unto me, There is no judge above God, and none that hath understanding above the Highest.

20 For there be many that perish in this life, because they despise the law of God that is set before them.

21 For God hath given strait commandment to such as came, what they should do to live, even as they came, and what they should observe to avoid punishment.

22 Nevertheless they were not obedient unto him; but spake against him, and imagined vain things;

23 and deceived themselves by their wicked deeds;

is often found in the Psalms; for instance, cxviii. 5: "I called upon "the Lord from out of the narrow place" ("in my trouble," Prayer-Book Version), "and the Lord heard me (and set me) in a wide place;" iv. 1; xviii. 19 (2 Sam. xxii. 20.); xxxi. 8. Job xxxvi. 16.

19—115 (45). The Final Judgment: the Waiting of the Souls Departed. The Rest and Blessedness of the Obedient; the Misery and Punishment of those who have Disobeyed, from which they cannot be Delivered by the Prayers of the Righteous.

19. "There is no judge above God." The Oriental Versions have, "Be not thou a judge above God, and understanding above the Most "High." See somewhat similar rebukes in iv. 34; v. 44. For the general sentiment, compare Job xxi. 22. Is. xl. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 16. Rom. xi. 34; and see above, iv. 2, 11.

20. "For there be many that perish." The manuscripts of the Latin (so the Æthiopic Version) read, "Let many perish of those who "live in this present life." Compare ix. 22, "Let the multitude perish "then," &c. Not so much the utterance of a wish as the declaration of an inevitable law and certain result: many must needs perish when the law of God is neglected. The Syriac renders by the future, "many "will perish." See also below, ver. 131 (61).

20 (and following verses). The writer now passes on to take a wider view; and, leaving the case of Israel, speaks of mankind at large.

21. "To such as came." Those who were born into the world. "Even as they came." That is, when they were born; with reference either to the law of conscience (Rom. ii. 14, 15), or the revealed law of God, which, like the Jewish law, was known and acknowledged in the community into which they were born. "To such as came:" For this sense of "to come" (meaning, to come into the world; to be born), compare vv. 132, 136 (62, 66), and Ps. lxxi. 18. Eccles. i. 4.

21, 22. "God hath given strait commandment . . . Nevertheless "they were not obedient." See below, ver. 72*.

22, 23. "Imagined vain things; and deceived themselves by their "wicked deeds." Compare Rom. i. 21. Eph. iv. 18.

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and said of the most High, that he is not ; and knew not his ways :

24 but his law have they despised, and denied his covenants ; in his statutes have they not been faithful, and have not performed his works.

25 And therefore, Esdras, for the empty are empty things, and for the full are the full things.

26 Behold, the time shall come, that these tokens which I have told thee shall come to pass, and the bride shall appear, and she coming forth shall be seen, that now is withdrawn from the earth.

27 And whosoever is delivered from the foresaid evils shall see my wonders.

28 For my son Jesus shall be revealed with those

23. "Said of the most High, that he is not;" viii. 58. Compare Ps. xiv. 1; liii. 1.

24. "His law have they despised." Compare ix. 11. 2 Esdras i. 34. Is. v. 24, "They have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and "despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

25. "For the empty are empty things." Compare Prov. i. 31, "They shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their "own devices."

"For the full are the full things." Compare also St. Matt. xiii. 12; xxv. 29, and the parallel places, "For unto every one that hath shall "be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not "shall be taken away even that which he hath."

26. "These tokens that I have told thee;" vi. 12, 18—28; v. 4—9. Compare xiii. 32.

"The bride shall appear." The Æthiopic, Arabic, and Armenian Versions have "city." Compare viii. 52, "Unto you is paradise opened, "the tree of life is planted . . . a city is builded;" xiii. 36, "Sion shall "come, and shall be shewed to all men, being prepared and builded." The manuscripts of the Latin have also "city," as well as "bride;" the Syriac renders, "the bride appearing as a city." If the transcribers of these Versions were not imitating Rev. xxi. 2, the resemblance is very striking: "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down "from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

"That now is withdrawn from the earth." The latter part of this verse should be translated, "and the land which is now withdrawn" (from view, hidden) "shall be shewn." The better land, the new world of righteousness (compare ver. 31.).

27. Compare vi. 25.

28. "For my son Jesus shall be revealed." "My Son;" ver. 29; xiii. 32, 37, 52; xiv. 9. "Jesus" is the reading of all our present Latin copies; and of the older copy, from which St. Ambrose, in his *Commentary on St. Luke* (i. 60.), quoted this verse and ver. 29, in order to prove that Our Lord had the name of Jesus given to Him by the Father long before He was born. It is clear, however, that some Chris-

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that be with him, and they that remain shall rejoice within four hundred years.

29 After these years shall my son Christ die, and all men that have life.

30 And the world shall be turned into the old silence seven days, like as in the ² former judgments: so that no man shall remain.

² Or, first beginning.

31 And after seven days the world, that yet

tian substituted the name of Jesus for the title Christ, either deliberately or carelessly, taking, as people often do now, one word as if it were much the same as the other. In the next verse no alteration has been made, and the old reading, "My Son Christ," remains. The other four Versions have *Messias*, *Anointed*, showing that Christ was the reading of the original. In xii. 32 the title is translated in our Version, "This" is the *Anointed*, which the Highest hath kept . . . unto the end."

"With those that be with him." See xiv. 9. Such as Enoch and Esdras, and those, like him, who had been taken away to be with the Son until the times were ended.

"They that remain." See vi. 25; xiii. 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26. Compare 1 Thess. iv. 15.

"Shall rejoice within" (during) "four hundred years." This period of four hundred years may, perhaps, be suggested by Gen. xv. 13; the faithful should rejoice with the Messiah for as long a time as they had been afflicted, and according to the years in which they had suffered adversity. "Four hundred years:" this reading of the present copies of the Latin is also the reading of the earlier copies, as it is cited by St. Ambrose in the passage in his *Commentary on St. Luke*, referred to in the earlier part of this *Note*. The Arabic Version also has "four hundred years." The *Æthiopic* and *Armenian* Versions, however, omit it; and the *Syriac* reads "thirty years." In Rev. xx. 4, 6, the saints live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

29. "And after those years shall my son Christ die, and all men that have life." Daniel (ix. 26.) speaks of the cutting off of *Messias*, or Christ. The writer here seems to have held the opinion that at the end of the four hundred years *Messias* and all men on the earth should die, and that after an interval ("seven days," vv. 30, 31.), there should take place the general resurrection and the judgment. This verse is omitted in the Arabic; and the *Armenian* Version omits also the whole passage (vv. 29—31.).

30. "The old silence." The silence of the time when the earth was without form and void, before the seven days of creation, when "silence was on every side" (vi. 39.).

"Like as in the former judgments." By an error of the Latin copyists, mistaking one very similar word for another, "judgments" has crept into the printed copies instead of "beginnings," which is the reading of the manuscripts and of the other Versions. The world is to be turned into silence, like as it was before, in the beginning, ere the work of creation was commenced.

31. "The world, that yet awaketh not." The new world, different

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awaketh not, shall be raised up, and that shall die that is corrupt.

32 And the earth shall restore those that are asleep in her, and so shall the dust those that dwell in silence, and the secret places shall deliver those souls that were committed unto them.

33 And the most High shall appear upon the seat of judgment, and misery shall pass away, and the long suffering shall have an end :

from that of which men now know; the world which hath been hitherto hidden from view (ver. 26, *Note*), that hath not yet been called into being.

"That shall die that is corrupt." See vi. 27; vii. 113, 114 (43, 44.); viii. 53.

32. Comp. Dan. xii. 2, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake;" Rev. xx. 13, "Death and hell" (Hades) "delivered up the dead which were in them."

"The secret places shall deliver those souls that were committed unto them." Compare iv. 41, 42. "The secret places:" In iv. 35, 41, the word is rendered "chambers" of souls, the receptacles in the hidden, unseen place, "hell," where souls separated from their bodies abide waiting the resurrection (see below, vv. 95*, 101*.).

If the writer were a Christian he could hardly speak more distinctly on the resurrection, the judgment (see also xiv. 35.), and the intermediate state of departed souls. St. Ambrose quotes this passage as "Scripture," in his book on the *Blessedness of Death*, written A.D. 387 (chap. x.); he cites it because it speaks of the dwellingplace of the soul after death. "The soul," says St. Ambrose, "is not buried with the body in the tomb; the soul is in the hand of God (Wisd. iii. 1.), and enjoyeth a holy rest, so that it is needless to garnish costly sepulchres, as if they were the receptacles of the soul, and not merely of the body. The dwellingplaces of souls is on high, for we read in the Books of Esdras that, when the day of judgment has come, the earth shall restore the bodies of the departed, and the dust shall restore the remains of the dead who sleep in the tombs, and the places wherein they dwell shall deliver those souls that were committed to them, and the Most High shall appear upon the seat of judgment. . . . Moreover, the Scripture calls those dwellingplaces the 'storehouses,' or 'the secret chambers' of souls." See also on ver. 95*.

33. "The most High shall appear upon the seat of judgment." Compare Dan. vii. 9, 10. Rev. xx. 12. See also xiv. 35, "For after death shall the judgment come, when we shall live again; and then shall the names of the righteous be manifest, and the works of the ungodly shall be declared."

"Misery shall pass away." The true reading is, "mercy." The Armenian Version has a forcible paraphrase, "The gates of repentance shall be shut." "Then shall it be too late to knock when the door shall be shut; and too late to cry for mercy when it is the time of justice" (*Communion Service*). Compare Prov. i. 28—30. St. Luke xiii. 25.

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34 but judgment only shall remain, truth shall stand, and faith shall wax strong:

35 and the work shall follow, and the reward shall be shewed, and the good deeds shall be of force, and wicked deeds shall bear no rule.

34. Compare vi. 28.

35. "The work shall follow, and the reward shall be shewed." Compare Rev. xiv. 13, "their works do follow them;" xxii. 12, "My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." 1 Cor. iii. 8, "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." "They that have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," St. John v. 29.

"The good deeds shall be of force, and wicked deeds shall bear no rule." The true reading is, "good deeds shall awaken" (compare Ecclus. xlv. 10, "whose righteousness hath not been forgotten"), and "wicked deeds shall not sleep." Good and evil deeds shall alike awaken out of the sleep of forgetfulness, and be brought to light out of the darkness of the past (Ecclus. xii. 14.).

No one can fail to observe the abruptness and want of connection with which the next sentence, numbered hitherto as ver. 36 (106.), follows on here. There is, in fact, omitted a long passage, which is found in the Syriac, the Æthiopic, the Arabic, and Armenian Versions. It was also contained in the earlier copies of the Latin Version, as large portions of it are cited by St. Ambrose (see *Notes* on 36*, 40*—42*, 80*—87*, 91*—101*), in his book on the *Blessedness of Death* (x.—xii.), written about A.D. 387; and Vigilantius in Spain, in the beginning of the fifth century, argued from it (see *Notes* on 102*—105*) against praying for the dead. In the later Latin copies this passage is not found, and the Latin Version of this portion of Esdras was supposed to have been lost. One cause of the omission has been that the leaf which once contained the lost portion has been cut out of the most ancient and important manuscript containing the Fourth Book of Esdras, leaving only about half an inch of its inner margin (see also *Note* on 106.). This manuscript, written A.D. 822, which formerly belonged to the Monastery of St. Germain des Prés, is now in the National Library at Paris. From this manuscript, thus mutilated, the later manuscripts followed by the printed editions appear to have been copied. The missing portion of the Latin Version has, however, been lately discovered by the learned Sub-Librarian of the University of Cambridge, in a manuscript of the ninth century, at Amiens.^a This missing portion, which must henceforth resume its place in future editions of the Fourth Book of Esdras, is here inserted, and, for convenience of reference, the verses are numbered onwards continuously from ver. 35. The Latin Version is chiefly but not wholly followed; as in some cases, by the aid of the other Versions, we are enabled more readily to attain to the probable reading of the original text.

^a See *The Missing Fragment of the Latin Translation of the Fourth Book of Ezra*, discovered and edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by Robert L. Bensley, M.A. Cambridge, 1875.

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And then shall appear the lake of torment, and 36*
opposite to it the place of rest; and there shall be
shewn the furnace of hell, and opposite to it the
paradise of delight. And then shall the most High 37*
say to the nations of the earth, awakened up (from
death), Behold and understand who he is whom
ye have denied, and whom ye have not served, and
whose commandments ye have despised. Look on 38*
this side and on that: here delight and rest, and
there fire and torments. These things shall he say
unto them in the day of judgment.

That day is such a day which hath neither sun, 39*
nor moon, nor stars, nor cloud, nor thunder, nor 40*
lightning, nor wind, nor water, nor air, nor dark-
ness, nor evening, nor morning, nor summer, nor 41*
spring, nor heat, nor winter, nor frost, nor cold,
nor hail, nor rain, nor dew, nor midday, nor night, 42*
nor brightness, nor clearness, nor light, save only
the splendour of the brightness of the most High,
by which all shall begin to behold those things
which are set before them; for it shall have du- 43*
ration as it were a week of years. This is my judg- 44*

36*. "The lake of torment." Compare Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10, 14, 15. The Latin has "place," which would seem to have been written, by the mistake of a single letter, instead of "lake."

"Opposite to it . . . Look on this side and that." See on vv. 83*, 85*, 93*.

"Hell." Gehenna; Compare St. Matt. v. 29, 30; x. 28; xviii. 9. St. Mark ix. 43, 45, 47, &c.

"Paradise." See on vii. 123 (53.), *Note*; viii. 52; and compare also iv. 7. This is quoted by St. Ambrose (see below, on vv. 40—42.).

37*. "Commandments." For the word thus rendered, see on iii. 19.

39*, 42*. "Neither sun, nor moon, nor stars . . . but the splendour
"of the brightness of the most High." Compare Rev. xxi. 23;
xxii. 5. Is. lx. 19, 20.

40*—42*. None can tell what that "day" will be like, but by this accumulation of negations of things such as are now known, an attempt is made to express more forcibly the idea how different it will be from anything hitherto experienced on the earth. These verses, and part of 36*, are quoted and abbreviated by St. Ambrose (*De Bono Mortis*, xii.).

41*. "Heat." The heat of autumn seems chiefly meant. The Æthiopic has "harvest."

43*. "A week of years." So the Latin, Syriac and Arabic Versions; the Æthiopic has "seven years." This period, or "day" of judgment, as in other respects, so in its length, will be unlike other days. "Seven," the sacred and symbolical number.

ment, and the appointment thereof; but to thee only have I shewed these things.

- 45* And I answered and said, O Lord, even now do I say, Blessed are they who when living keep those
 46* things which are approved by thee; but what of those for whom my prayer was made: for who is there of those now living who hath not sinned, or who of those that have been born who hath not
 47* transgressed thy covenant? And now I perceive that unto few will that future life bring delight,
 48* but unto many will it bring torments. For there hath grown within us an evil heart which hath put us away as strangers from these (promised blessings), and hath led us into corruption, and into the ways of death, hath shewn unto us the paths of perdition, and made us far from life, and this, not for a few, but for almost all who have
 49* been created. And he answered unto me and said, Hear me, and I will instruct thee, and yet again
 50* will I correct thee: for this cause the most High
 51* hath not made one world, but two. But do thou, because thou hast said that the just are not many

44*. "To thee only have I shewed these things." Compare ver. 104*; vi. 33; x. 59; xii. 9, 36; xiii. 56.

45*—48*. See below, vv. 68*, 69*; and more fully, vv. 119—123 (49—53.), where Esdras laments that the blessedness held out to the righteous seems almost to mock men with a vain and delusive hope, in that it is to no purpose that there should be promised to mankind paradise and immortality, while in fact the mass of men are so wicked, that they do the works which bring death.

45*. Compare Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life."

46*. "Those for whom my prayer was made." So the Latin, Syriac, and Arabic Versions. Compare viii. 17. Rom. x. 1. The Æthiopic has, however, "that about which I asked thee;" with which rendering compare iv. 28, 33.

"Who is there who hath not sinned?" Compare iv. 38; viii. 35.

47*. "Unto few;" vv. 51*, 60*, 61*; viii. 1, 3, 55; ix. 15, 22.

48*. "An evil heart." See iii. 20, 21, 26; iv. 4, 30, 31; and vii. 92*.

49*. Compare above, v. 32.

50*. "The most High hath not made one world, but two." This world and the world to come (viii. 1.), so that in judging of God's righteousness and wisdom, the view must not be confined to this world alone, in which is seen but a small part of the scheme of God's providence. Compare above, ver. 16.

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but few, while the wicked are greatly multiplied, hear what is said in answer to these things. If 52* thou shalt have of precious stones a very few, wilt thou increase their number by adding unto them lead and earthen vessels? And I said, Lord, how 53* can this be?

And he said unto me, Not only this; but ask 54* the earth and it will tell thee, beg of it and it will declare unto thee; Say unto it, Thou hast 55* produced gold and silver and copper, iron also and lead and clay; but silver is more plentiful 56* than gold, and copper is more plentiful than silver, and iron than copper, lead than iron, and clay than lead. Judge therefore with thyself which things are 57* precious and desirable, those which are abundant, or those of which there is but little produced. And 58* I said, O Lord that bearest rule, those things which are abundant are little valued, and those which are rare are accounted precious. And he answered unto me and said, Judge then from those things which 59* thine own thoughts have shewed thee, that as he who hath but a little of that which is rare and precious rejoices over it, more than he who hath much that is common and of little worth, so is 60* it with the judgment which I have promised; for

52*. The Arabic Version seems here to have preserved most clearly the meaning of the passage.

54*. "Ask the earth . . . gold." See viii. 2.

54*—56*. We have here an argument from analogy; another argument of a similar kind, from "the analogy of religion to the constitution and course of Nature," is drawn in viii. 41 from the few seeds which out of a vast multitude come to perfection.

"Ask the earth and it will tell thee;" viii. 2. Compare also x. 9.

57*. "Judge therefore with thyself." We have above (iv. 31.), in the same words, the same appeal to the natural sense and judgment of the listener, left to draw for himself the obvious inference. Compare St. Luke xii. 57.

58*. "O Lord that bearest rule;" iii. 4.

60*. "The judgment." So the Syriac and Arabic Versions. The Latin, which is corrupt here, has "creature," or "creation," as the word is variously rendered in Rom. viii. 19—21, which in the Greek would differ from "judgment" by only a single letter. The Latin would, however, come to much the same general meaning as the rendering in the text: This is the law or principle according to which the Divine scheme of creation has been arranged, that it is worth while for the

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- I will rejoice over the few who shall be saved, because they are they who have made my glory to prevail, and through whom my name is magnified ;
- 61* And I will not be grieved over the multitude of them that perish, for they are those who are made like unto vapour and flame, who are made even as the smoke and have burned away, who have blazed fiercely and are extinct.
- 62* And I said, O thou earth, what hast thou brought forth, if it be that understanding be made like other
- 63* created things, out of the dust? For it would have been better that the dust itself should have re-

sake of the glorious few who are saved to risk the perishing of the unworthy many.

"I will rejoice over the few . . . I will not be grieved over "the multitude." See below, ver. 131 (61.); and viii. 38, 39. Compare also ix. 22.

"Through whom my name is magnified," or glorified. So the Syriac and Æthiopic Versions. Compare Ps. lxxxvi. 9, 12. Is. xxix. 23. St. Matt. v. 16. Rev. xv. 4; and contrast Is. lii. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 23. Rom. ii. 24. The Latin has "named," and the Arabic renders, "These are My peculiar people, upon whom My name is called," which latter clause repeats Deut. xxviii. 10. Is. lxiii. 19. Jer. xiv. 9. Dan. x. 18, 19. Amos ix. 12, and similar places.

61*. "Even as the smoke." Compare Ps. lxviii. 2. Hos. xiii. 3.

"And flame . . . are extinct." Compare Ps. cxviii. 12. Is. xliii. 17. Nah. i. 10. Mal. iv. 1.

62*. "O thou earth, what hast thou brought forth?" Compare ver. 118 (48.), "O thou Adam, what hast thou done?"

"Thou earth . . . hast thou brought forth?" Compare vi. 53; iii. 4, *Note*.

"If it be that understanding be made . . . out of the dust." According to the Latin Version here, the writer seems to be in doubt how far he ought to reckon "understanding" (see also vv. 64*, 71*, 72*; xiv. 34.),—intelligence, perception, and feeling,—as connected, like the faculty of discerning objects by the senses, with the bodily part of man. It is, however, very doubtful whether this clause as read in the Latin Version was part of the original text. The only other Version in which something like it is found is the Syriac, which runs thus: "O thou earth, what hast thou done, from whom those miserable ones "are born and go into perdition (compare x. 10.). If indeed the understanding were of the dust, like other creatures, it would be expedient "for us; and O that the understanding were in very deed but dust! but "now it is not so, for the understanding is not from thence." It is of a higher nature, and does not die with the body. The Arabic renders, "O that thou hadst been as one that hath not been created! O that "thou hadst never existed at all." Compare ver. 116 (46.).

63*. "It would have been better . . . unborn." See ver. 116 (46.), and Eccles. iv. 3.

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mained unborn, so that thereby understanding also might not have been created. But now understand- 64*
ing groweth with us, and for this reason we are
tormented because having knowledge we perish. Let 65*
the race of men mourn, but let the beasts of the
field rejoice; let all who have been born (of mankind)
lament, but let the fourfooted creatures and the
flocks be glad. For it is much better with them than 66*
with us, for they look not for judgment, nor do
they know of torments or of salvation promised to
them after death. But to us what profit is it that 67*
we shall be saved with a great salvation, if with
torment we shall be tormented? For all who have 68*
been born are entangled in iniquities, and are full
of sins and weighed down with transgressions; and 69*
if we were not after death to come into judgment, it
would have been better for us.

And he answered to me and said, When the most 70*
High created and made the world, and Adam and
in him all who came from him, he decreed before-
hand the judgment and all things appertaining to
the judgment. And now learn from thine own words,
for thou hast said that understanding groweth up 71*
with us. They therefore who dwell upon the earth 72*
will for this reason be tormented, that having un-
derstanding they committed iniquity, and having
received commandments did not keep them, and
having obtained a law, deceitfully made void that
law which they received. What then will they have 73*
to say in the judgment? or how will they answer

67*, 68*. See vv. 45*, 47*, 48*, and vv. 119—123 (49—53.).

68*. "Full of sins." See vv. 48*, and 119—123 (49—53.); and iii. 20, *Note*; viii. 35.

69*. "After death to come into judgment." See besides the passages in this chapter, vv. 36*, 66*, 81*—87*, 117 (47.), 126 (56.); ix. 12; xiv. 35.

70*. "Decreed beforehand;" ver. 74*. Compare St. Matt. xxv. 34, "prepared . . . from the foundation of the world." The Armenian paraphrase expands it thus: "From the beginning of creation, before that man was made upon the earth, the Most High in His foreknowledge prepared a place of delight and a place of torment."

71*. "Thou hast said;" ver. 64*.

72*. "Having received commandments did not keep them." Compare vv. 21—24; viii. 55—57, *Note*; ix. 11.

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- 74* in the last times? For how long is the time during which the most High hath been long-suffering towards those who dwell on the earth! and yet not on their account, but on account of those times which he hath foreappointed.
- 75* And I answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O Lord, shew, O Lord, unto thy servant, whether after death, when each one of us doth yield up the ghost, we shall be securely kept in a state of rest until there come those times in which thou shalt renew thy creation, or whether
- 76* we shall be at once tormented. And he answered me and said, I will shew to thee this thing also, for thou hast not joined thyself unto those who have been despisers, neither shalt thou be numbered with those who are tormented. For thou hast laid up for thee in store a treasure of (good) works with the most High, but it shall not be shewn to
- 77* thee till the last times. Now concerning death, this is my word: When there shall have gone forth the final sentence from the most High that a man must

74*. "How long is the time." The longer the period through which God's patience and long-suffering hath waited, that men might be led to repentance (compare Rom. ii. 4, 5; and below, ix. 11.), the more completely "without excuse" will the disobedient be found when they are at last condemned.

75*. "If I have found favour in thy sight." Compare ver. 102*. See on v. 56.

"Those times in which thou shalt renew thy creation;" or, "the creature," as in Rom. viii. 19. Compare Acts iii. 21; and Rev. xxi. 1, 5, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

76*. "Thou hast not joined thyself unto those who have been despisers." Æthiopic and Arabic. The Latin has, "Do not thou join thyself."

"Despisers;" ver. 79*; viii. 56. Compare 1 Sam. ii. 30. Prov. i. 30. Is. v. 24. Ezek. xx. 13, 16, 24. Acts xiii. 41.

77*. "Thou hast laid up for thee in store a treasure of (good) works" (viii. 33.). "Laid up for thee in store a treasure," &c. Compare Tobit iv. 9. 1 Tim. 6. 19. St. Luke xii. 33, "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."

76*, 77*. Other praises of Esdras will be found in ver. 104*; vi. 32, 33; viii. 48; x. 57, 59; xii. 9, 36; xiii. 54, 56.

78*. Compare Eccles. xii. 7, "the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it;" and above, iii. 5. This seems to be the passage principally alluded to by St. Ambrose (*Epist.* xxxiv.), when, in answer to an enquiry

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die, when the spirit goeth forth from the body that it may be sent back again to him who gave it, in the first place it adareth the glory of the most High. And if it be one of those who have been despisers, 79* and have not kept the ways of the most High, who have set at nought his law, and hated those who fear him, these spirits shall not enter into dwelling- 80* places, but wandering about shall henceforth be in torments, always lamenting and made sad in seven ways. The first way: (their remembrance) that they 81* have despised the law of the most High. The second: 82* that they cannot be converted, so as to do good works and live. The third: that they see the re- 83* ward laid up for those who have believed the co-

concerning the substance of the soul, he advises Horontianus to read the Book of Esdras, who, by the hidden wisdom which he had derived from revelation, had spoken of the soul as of a higher nature than it had been made out to be by the trifling and materialistic fancies of the philosophers.

78*. "In the first place it adareth the glory of the most High." The first impression made on each soul, whether bad or good (ver. 91*), on departing from the body, is the perception of the might and majesty of the God into Whose more immediate presence it has been brought.

79*. "Despisers" (ver. 76*), . . . "have hated those that fear him." Compare viii. 57. Contrast Ps. xv. 4.

80*. "These spirits shall not enter into dwellingplaces." Compare vv. 85*, 95*, 101*.

80*—87*. St. Ambrose (*De Bono Mortis*, x.) gives a summary of this passage; further on, he quotes at greater length vv. 91*—101*, as setting forth not only the future retribution of glory and punishment, but as showing that during the time of expectation, while souls are waiting for their appointed reward, the souls of the righteous are not without some fruit of enjoyment, nor the wicked souls without their foretaste of suffering. See also *Note* on ver. 95*.

81*. Remorse and unavailing regrets, the memory of their evil deeds, of neglected warnings and lost opportunities, make up part of the torment and confusion of the lost. Compare St. Ambrose, referred to in the *Note* on ver. 93*.

82*. "That they cannot be converted." The time was past in which it could be said to them, "turn yourselves and live ye" (Ezek. xviii. 27—32); there was now no "place of repentance" (ix. 11.). So the Syriac, Arabic, and Latin. The Æthiopic Version, however, takes it as meaning that they could not return to life again; there was no coming back to earth again to lead better lives, and so live.

83*—87*. The writer evidently thought that the final condition of man's soul was irrevocably determined by his conduct during life (ver. 79*); and it does not occur to him to suppose that there could be any repentance or amendment in the state after death. See vv. 112—115 (42—45.).

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84* venants of the most High. The fourth: that they have to ponder on the torment laid up for them-
 85* selves in the last days. The fifth: that they see the dwellingplace of the others, kept by the angels,
 86* in great peace. The sixth: that they see how from among them some shall from time to time pass away
 87* into torment. The seventh way, which is greater than all the ways which have been spoken of before: that they shall pine in confusion, and be consumed in horrors, and waste away in fears, as they see the glory of the most High, in whose sight they sinned while living, and before whom they shall be judged in the last times.

88* But of those who have kept the ways of the most High the order is this, when they shall begin to be delivered from the corruptible vessel (of the
 89* body). For in the time that they tarried in the

83*. Compare ver. 36*. The torments of the wicked souls are represented as embittered by the thought of what they had lost, by the contrast of their misery with the joys of the blessed. Compare St Luke xvi. 23, where, in Hades or hell, in the intermediate state, the rich man in torment is described, in figurative and pictorial language, as seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. In like manner in ver. 93*, the happiness of the saved is increased by their beholding the sorrows of the lost.

The state of the wicked is in two respects contrasted with that of the righteous: with respect to their future reward at the last day (vv. 83*, 84.); with respect to their present state of calm and peace (ver. 85*.).

"The covenants;" iv. 23; v. 29.

84*. See the last *Note* on ver. 95*.

The Syriac Version adds at the end, after the "last days:" "in which the souls of the impious shall be punished, because while they had time for working, they did not submit themselves to the precepts of the Most High."

85*. "The dwellingplace;" vv. 80*, 95*.

"Kept by the angels in great peace;" or, "silence" (ver. 95*.).

86*. The translations of the Versions vary. According to the Latin, which is followed in the text, some souls pass out of their state of restlessness and pain (ver. 80*.), and fearful looking forward to the judgment to come (ver. 84*.), into a state wherein they are made to endure something still more sharp and terrible in the way of penal retribution.

88*. "The corruptible vessel." The body. The Roman poet Lucretius (iii. 441.), writing in the earlier part of the century before Christ, speaks of the body as the "vessel" of the soul. See also the passages quoted in the *Note* on iv. 11.

88*—98*. Compare Wisd. iii. 1—5, "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them," &c.

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world they served diligently the most High, and all their days endured danger that they might keep the law of the Lawgiver. Wherefore this is the 90* word concerning them; first of all, they behold 91* with great joy the glory of him who hath taken them to himself, and they rest through seven stages (of bliss). The first: (their remembrance) that with 92* much labour they strove to conquer the inclination to evil created with them, that it might not seduce them from life to death. The second: that they see 93* the confusion in which are wandering the souls of the impious, and the punishment which doth await them. The third: that they behold the testimony 94* which he who created them hath borne for them, that while living they kept the law which was given to them in trust. The fourth: that they understand 95* the rest wherewith being gathered into the secret chambers, they now do rest, in great tranquillity, guarded by the angels, and the glory which await-

91*—101*. This passage is quoted and expanded by St. Ambrose (*De Bono Mortis*, xi.).

92*. "Inclination to evil." In the Latin, "evil thought." See the passages referred to in the *Note* on iii. 20, 21, 26.

"Created with them." Compare ver. 48*.

93*. In a similar way, in vv. 83*, 85*, it is said, that the misery of the lost souls is aggravated by their contrasting it with the reward laid up for the righteous. St. Ambrose, when quoting and paraphrasing this passage on the happiness of the souls of the just, adds among his explanations that they are free from remorse, they are not like the souls of the wicked, tormented by the memory of their own vices.

"In which are wandering the souls of the impious." See ver. 80*.

94*. Comp. Rev. iii. 5, "I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." St Matt. x. 32.

"The law which was given them in trust." Compare 1 Tim. vi. 20. 2 Tim. i. 14. Rom. iii. 2. So the Latin and Syriac. The Æthiopic translator has construed the passage somewhat differently, "that they have faithfully kept in their lives the law which 'was given 'them.'"

95*. "The rest." Compare Rev. xiv. 13, "they rest from their labours."

"Secret chambers;" or, storehouses (see on ver. 32; and compare ver. 101*), in paradise, or "hell," as this hidden dwellingplace is called in the Apostles' Creed. Herein the souls of the departed faithful wait till the resurrection, the times in which God reneweth His creatures (see ver. 75*), when they shall be "made perfect" (Heb. xi. 40.), and receive "the glory which awaiteth them in the last times."

96* eth them in the last times. The fifth : that they exult because they have now escaped corruption, and shall possess the future inheritance, while still they contemplate the strait and toilsome condition from which they have been delivered, and the freedom which they now begin to receive, rejoicing

“Tranquillity.” The Latin has an expressive word, “silence.”

“Guarded by the angels.” See ver. 85*. Compare St. Luke xvi. 22, “carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.”

“They understand the rest . . . and the glory.” The writer here intimates that, since this life is so different from the life to come, there hath not entered even into the hearts of the faithful the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him (Compare Is. lxiv. 4. 1 Cor. ii. 9.). It was not till they had passed into the unseen world that they began to understand the sweetness and calm of the place of rest, and the surpassing happiness of the future glory.

“The rest wherewith . . . they now do rest . . . and the glory which awaiteth them in the last times.” On the question whether the Fourth Book of Esdras was written before the rise of Christianity, see *Introduction*. It may, however, be observed, that from the earliest times Christians have held, “that the souls of the righteous are carried ‘somewhither, and abide in a better place, and the wicked in a worse place, awaiting the time of judgment.’” Compare ver. 84*. Justin Martyr (died cir. 165 A.D.), *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. v., p. 223 B :—that “the saints at their departure out of this life do not forthwith ‘receive their full reward, but are waiting for us who still remain on ‘earth’” (Compare Heb. xi. 40. Origen, *Hom. vii., in Levit.*) :—that “all ‘souls when they have departed from the world, have their differing ‘receptions,—the good have joys, the wicked have torments ; but when ‘the resurrection shall have come to pass, the joy of the good shall ‘be more full, and the torments of the wicked more severe” (St. Augustine, on St. John xi. See also St. Ambrose in the *Note* on 80*—87*). The English reader who may wish to see further illustrations, may find perhaps enough for his purpose in the *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles* by the Bishop of Winchester, with translations of passages from Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Lactantius, Hilary, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine (Art. III, i. 3 : “It is well known that the early Christians ‘believed in an intermediate state of the soul between death and judgment,’ &c.). See also Bishop Bull’s sermons (Serm. III, *On the Middle State of Happiness and Misery*). Jeremy Taylor also, in his funeral sermon on Sir George Dalstone (*Supplement of Sermons*, Vol. VIII.), dwells at length on this subject, showing, “that in the state of separation ‘the spirits of good men shall be blessed and happy souls : they have ‘an antepast, or taste of their reward ; but their great reward itself, ‘their crown of righteousness, shall not be yet,—that shall not be till ‘the day of judgment.” See also St. Luke xxiii. 43. Heb. xi. 40. Rev. vi. 9—11 ; and the prayer after the Lord’s Prayer, in the *Order for the Burial of the Dead*, in the Book of Common Prayer.

96*. Compare Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

“Strait . . . liberty ;” or, “wide place.” See *Note* on ver. 18.

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and immortal. The sixth: that it shall be shewn 97* to them how their face shall begin to shine as the sun, and they shall be made like unto the light of the stars, henceforth no more to return to corruption. The seventh, which is greater than all those that 98* have been spoken of before: that they exult with confidence, and trust without confusion, and rejoice without fear, for they are hastening to see the face of him whose servants they have been while living, and from whom they now begin in glory to receive their reward.

This is the order of the souls of the righteous, as 99* hath been just declared; and these, as before described, are the ways of torment which they shall henceforth suffer who have been neglectful.

And I answered and said, Will there then be 100* given to souls after they are separated from their bodies, time to see those things of which thou hast spoken unto me? And he said, For seven days there 101* will be freedom for them to see those things of which I have told thee, and afterwards they shall be gathered into their habitations.

And I answered and said, If I have found favour 102* in thy sight, shew yet further unto me thy servant, whether in the day of judgment the just shall be

97*. "Their face shall begin to shine as the sun." Compare St. Matt. xiii. 43.

"Made like unto the light of the stars;" ver. 125 (55.). Dan. xii. 3.

98*. "Confidence." Compare 1 John ii. 28; iv. 17.

"To see the face of him whose servants they have been." Compare Rev. xxii. 3, 4, "His servants... shall see His face." 1 John iii. 2.

101*. "Gathered unto their habitations." The restingplace of souls until the resurrection and the judgment (see ver. 95*.).

102*—105*. This passage was cited by Vigilantius, writing in Spain in the beginning of the fifth century, as an authority in support of his opinion, that, though during life we are able to pray for each other, yet that no prayers could be heard for others after they were dead. The work of Vigilantius is lost, but we have the answer,—the somewhat rude answer,—of St. Jerome, in which he speaks contemptuously of the Apocryphal book under the name of Esdras, brought forward by Vigilantius and those who thought with him. A book, Jerome says, he had never read, for there was no need to take up a book which the Church did not receive (see Jerome's work, *Against Vigilantius*, chap. vi.).

102*. "If I have found favour in thy sight;" ver. 75*; v. 56; vi. 11.

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able to intercede for the impious, or to deprecate in
103* their behalf the wrath of the most High, Whether
fathers for sons, or sons for parents, or brothers
for brothers, or relations for their nearest kindred,
or friends for those most dear.

104* And he answered unto me and said, Since thou
hast found grace in my sight, I will shew even
this unto thee: the day of judgment is a day of
final and decisive judgment, and shall shew unto
all the seal of truth; for as even now a father doth
not send his son, or a son his father, or a master
his slave, or a friend his dearest friend, that in his
stead he may be ill, or eat, or sleep, or be healed,
105* so never will any one pray for another, for all shall
then bear, every one for themselves, their own in-
iquities and their own righteousness.

^b Gen. 18. 23. 106 (36) Then said I, ^bAbraham prayed first for

104*. "And he answered . . . or a master his slave." The sentence which begins and ends with these words, that is, nearly all ver. 104*, has been omitted in the Latin, and has to be supplied from the other Versions.

"Thou hast found grace in my sight." Compare on ver. 77*.

"I will shew even this unto thee." See on ver. 44*.

"A day of final and decisive judgment." See also below, vv. 112—115 (42—45.).

"That in his stead he may be ill." This is the reading of the Syriac and Æthiopic Versions; the Latin has, "may understand."

105*. "So neither shall any one pray for another." The Æthiopic Version adds a clause to this effect, "Neither shall any one transfer to his neighbour his own brethren;" to the same general purport also the Syriac, "Neither shall any one weigh down another." Compare ver. 115 (45.).

With the latter part of this verse, compare Deut. xxiv. 16. Ezek. xviii. 20, "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Rom. ii. 6. Gal. vi. 5, 7, 8, "Every man shall bear his own burden." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

106 (36.). The first words of this verse have been cut off with the rest of the missing passage, and in the oldest manuscript of the Fourth Book of Esdras, now at Paris, from which, as noted above on ver. 35, the leaf containing vv. 36*—105* has been cut out, the verse on the next page begins abruptly, "... first Abraham for the Sodomites." In order to render the omission less conspicuous, subsequent copyists added, "And I said." The reading was, as we find in the Oriental Versions, and in the Latin Version now recovered from the Amiens manuscript, "And I answered and said, How then do we find that first Abraham prayed, &c." "Abraham prayed." Gen. xviii. 23; xix. 29.

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the Sodomites, and ^o Moses for the fathers that sinned in the wilderness: ^o Ex. 32. 11.

107 (37) ^d and Jesus after him for Israel in the time of ² Achan: ^d Josh. 7. 6, 7.
² Or, *Achor*.

108 (38) and ^e Samuel and ^f David for the destruction: and ^g Solomon for them that should come to the sanctuary: ^e 1 Sam. 7. 9.
^f 2 Sam. 24. 17.
^g 2 Chr. 6. 14, &c.

109 (39) and ^h Helias for those that received rain; and for the dead, that he might live: ^h 1 Kin. 17. 21. & 18. 42, 45.

110 (40) and ⁱ Ezechias for the people in the time of Sennacherib: and many for many. ⁱ 2 Kin. 19. 15.

111 (41) Even so now, seeing corruption is grown up, and wickedness increased, and the righteous have prayed for the ungodly: wherefore shall it not be so now also?

112 (42) He answered me, and said, This present life is not the end where much glory doth abide; therefore have they prayed for the weak.

113 (43) But the day of doom shall be the end of this time, and the beginning of the immortality for to come, wherein corruption is past,

“Moses.” Exod. xxxii. 11—14. Deut. ix. 18—29. Ps. cvi. 23.

107 (37). “Jesus;” that is, Joshua (Acts vii. 45. Heb. iv. 8. Eccles. xlv. 1. See 1 Esdr. v. 5, 8, *Note*), Josh. vii. 6. “Jesus” is inserted by the translators; the printed Latin text omits it, but it is found in the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic Versions, and the best manuscripts of the Latin. “Achan” is another correction; the Latin has Achaz, the Syriac and Arabic Achar.

108 (38). “Samuel;” 1 Sam. vii. 8; xii. 23. Ps. xcix. 6. “David;” 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. “Destruction.” Pestilence, Æthiopic. “Solomon;” 1 Kin. viii. 23—53.

109 (39). “Helias;” that is, Elijah (James v. 17, 18. 1 Kin. xvii. 21; xviii. 42.).

110 (40). “Ezechias;” 2 Kin. xix. 15. Is. xxxvii. 15.

“Many for many.” Compare Gen. xx. 17. Job xlii. 8.

112—115 (42—45). This world is provisional, the next world is final; in that world men are no longer in a state of probation, admitting of changes, their condition is irreversible. The Armenian Version paraphrases to the effect, that the prayers of the just for the wicked were heard, because in this world repentance could profit those for whom they prayed, but in that world, where the course of repentance had passed away, no one could obtain mercy who had fallen into judgment for his transgressions.

112 (42). “Therefore have they prayed for the weak.” The Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic Versions have, “therefore have they prayed, the strong for the weak.”

113 (43). “Immortality;” viii. 54.

113, 114 (43, 44). “Corruption is past . . . intemperance is at end.”

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114 (44) intemperance is at an end, infidelity is cut off, righteousness is grown, and truth is sprung up.

115 (45) Then shall no man be able to save him that is destroyed, nor to oppress him that hath gotten the victory.

116 (46) I answered then and said, This is my first and last saying, that it had been better not to have given the earth unto Adam: or else, when it

Compare ver. 31; vi. 27; viii. 53; and Rev. xxi. 27, "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."

114 (44). "Righteousness is grown, truth is sprung up;" ver. 34; vi. 28; viii. 52. Compare 2 Pet. iii. 13, "new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

115 (45). "To save him that is destroyed." The Oriental Versions prefer to render, "to shew mercy towards him that hath been overcome in the judgment."

"Him that hath gotten the victory;" ver. 128 (58). Compare Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26; iii. 5, 12, 21; xv. 2; xxi. 7; and 1 John ii. 14; v. 4, 5.

116—140 (46—70). Esdras pleadeth against the justice of God in punishing men for their evil deeds, that man has been left so prone to sin, that promises of life are made in vain to those whose evil nature leads them continually to follow the paths that end in death; and that therefore it would have been better either that man had been made less wicked, or that he had not been created at all. Esdras received an answer to his complaint (127—131), but yet again pleadeth with the merciful God, that He would spare His own creation, erring and sinful as it might be.

116 (46). "It had been better not to have given the earth unto Adam: or else, when it was given him, to have restrained him from sinning." The translators have here followed the alteration made by Junius (see on xiii. 2.). The printed text of the Latin, which is here the true text, supported by the manuscripts and other Versions, is, "It had been better for the earth not to have produced (given forth) Adam; or else, when it had produced him, to have restrained him from sinning." Compare vi. 53, "thou gavest commandment unto the earth, that before thee it should bring forth . . . Adam." See vv. 62*, 63*, "O thou earth, what hast thou brought forth? . . . for it had been better that the dust had not been born," &c.; and x. 14.

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was given him, to have restrained him from sinning.

117 (47) For what profit is it for men now in this present time to live in heaviness, and after death to look for punishment?

118 (48) O thou Adam, what hast thou done? for though it was ^k thou that sinned, thou art not fallen ^k Rom. 5. 18. alone, but we all that come of thee.

119 (49) For what profit is it unto us, if there be promised us an immortal time, whereas we have done the works that bring death?

120 (50) And that there is promised us an everlasting hope, whereas ourselves being most wicked are made vain?

121 (51) And that there are laid up for us dwellings of health and safety, whereas we have lived wickedly?

122 (52) And that the glory of the most High is kept to defend them which have led ² a wary life, whereas ² Or, a chaste life. we have walked in the most wicked ways of all?

123 (53) And that there should be shewed a para-

“To have restrained him from sinning.” See iii. 20—22.

117 (47). “What profit for men now to live in heaviness.” Compare iv. 12.

“After death to look for punishment.” See on ver. 126 (56.), and compare vv. 67*, 69*; ix. 12; xiv. 35.

118 (48). “O thou Adam, what hast thou done?” Compare a similar expostulation, ver. 62*: “O thou earth, what hast thou brought forth?”

119—125 (49—55). See above, vv. 67*, 68*, where the same thoughts are more briefly expressed. See also vv. 47*, 48*.

In sadness of spirit Esdras speaks of the seeming cruelty of tantalizing man with glorious promises of happiness in a future life, while leaving him with so evil a nature that to these promises very few should attain (ver. 116 (46.); iii. 20, 21; viii. 35.).

“The present state,” says Bishop Butler (*Analogy*, I. v.), “is so far from proving in event a discipline of virtue to the generality of men, that, on the contrary, they seem to make it a discipline of vice.”

119 (49). “The works that bring death.” Compare Rom. vi. 21, 23, “the end of these things is death;” viii. 13. James i. 15.

122 (52). “A wary life.” The *Margin*, “chaste,” is the reading of the best manuscripts of the Latin. So the Syriac Version.

123 (53). “A paradise;” iv. 7; vii. 36*; viii. 52, “unto you paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted.” Compare Rev. ii. 7. St. Luke xxiii. 42. The original meaning of the word is, “park,” or “orchard” (see above, on iii. 6.).

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² Or, *fulness*. dise, whose fruit endureth for ever, wherein is ² security and medicine, since we shall not enter into it?

124 (54) For we have walked in unpleasant places.

125 (55) And that the faces of them which have used abstinence shall shine above the stars, whereas our faces shall be blacker than darkness?

126 (56) For while we lived and committed iniquity, we considered not that we should begin to suffer for it after death.

² Or, *intent*. 127 (57) Then answered he me, and said, This is the ³ condition of the battle, which man that is born upon the earth shall fight;

128 (58) that, if he be overcome, he shall suffer as thou hast said: but if he get the victory, he shall receive the thing that I say.

“Whose fruit endureth for ever.” Compare ver. 13, “immortal fruit.”

“Wherein is . . . medicine.” Compare Rev. xxii. 2, “the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

“Security;” *Margin*, “fulness.” The manuscripts of the Latin vary; the two words in Latin are not unlike, and one might easily be mistaken by a transcriber for the other. The reading in the *Margin* has most authority, and is supported by the other Versions, which have “delight.”

123 (53). “Medicine.” The Syriac renders, “health;” the Æthiopic, “life.” The Latin rendering, “medicine,” or healing, tells of the sickness from which there has been recovery.

124 (54). “We have walked in unpleasant places.” Contrast Prov. iii. 17, of Wisdom, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” The ways of wickedness are wearisome to walk in, and leave no pleasant memories behind.

125 (55). “The faces of them that have used abstinence shine above the stars.” See ver. 97*.

“Our faces . . . blacker than darkness.” Lam. iv. 8. Joel ii. 6. Nahum ii. 10. Jer. viii. 21.

126 (56). “To suffer for it after death.” See ver. 117 (47.), “after death to look for punishment,” and the places there referred to; vv. 67*, 69*; ix. 12; xiv. 35; and vv. 78*—99*. It will be thus seen that the future life is brought out very distinctly in this book. Compare also 2 Macc. vi. 26; vii. 9, 14, 29, 36. Wisd. iii. 4; v. 5. In the time of our Lord, the Jews in general believed in the life after death (see, for instance, St. Matt. xxii. 28. St. Luke xvi. 23. Acts xxiv. 15.).

127 (57). “The battle, which man that is born upon the earth shall fight.” Compare 1 Tim. i. 18; vi. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4; iv. 7. Eph. vi. 10—17. The same metaphor is used in the *Baptismal Office*, “manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil.” Compare also xvi. 40 (5 Esdras).

128 (58). “If he get the victory.” See ver. 115 (45.), and the passages there referred to.

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129 (59) For this is the life whereof Moses spake unto the people while he lived, saying, ¹ Choose thee ¹ Deut. 30. 19. life, that thou mayest live.

130 (60) Nevertheless they believed not him, nor yet the prophets after him, no nor me which have spoken unto them,

131 (61) that there should not be such heaviness

116—128 (46—58).. It may not be out of place to append here a few sentences from the conclusion of the First Part of Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, to which work the reader who has not already made acquaintance with it will be glad to be referred:—

“Our future and general interest, under the moral government of God, “is appointed to depend upon our behaviour, notwithstanding the “difficulty which this may occasion of securing it, and the danger of “losing it; just in the same manner as our temporal interest, under His “natural government, is appointed to depend upon our behaviour, not- “withstanding the like difficulty and danger. For from our original “constitution, and that of the world which we inhabit, we are naturally “trusted with ourselves, with our own conduct and our own interest. “And from the same constitution of nature, especially joined with that “course of things which is owing to men, we have temptations to be “unfaithful to this trust, to forfeit this interest, to neglect it, and run “ourselves into misery and ruin. From these temptations arise the “difficulties of behaving so as to secure our temporal interest, and the “hazard of behaving so as to miscarry in it. There is therefore “nothing incredible in supposing, that there may be the like difficulty “and hazard with regard to that chief and final good which religion “lays before us. Indeed, the whole account how it came to pass that we “were placed in such a condition as this, must be beyond our compre- “hension. But it is in part accounted for by what religion teaches us, “that the character of virtue and piety must be a necessary qualification “for a future state of society and happiness under the moral government “of God, in like manner as some certain qualifications or other are “necessary for every particular condition of life under His natural “government; and that the present state was intended to be a school of “discipline for improving in ourselves that character” (Butler's *Analogy*, I. vii. See also I. ii., “On the Government of God by Rewards and Punishments”).

129 (59). See Deut. xxx. 19; and compare Eccus. xv. 16, 17, “He “hath set fire and water before thee: stretch forth thy hand unto whether “thou wilt. Before man is life and death; and whether him liketh shall “be given him.” See below, viii. 56.

130 (60). “Believed not the prophets.” Compare 2 Esdr. i. 32. Jer. vii. 25; xxvi. 5, &c.

131 (61). The same thoughts have been more fully expressed above, yv. 60*, 61*, “For I will rejoice over the few, who shall be saved, “because . . . and I will not be grieved over the multitude of them “that perish, for they,” &c.; vii. 20, “For there be many that perish.”

“That there should not be such heaviness in their destruction;” i.e. because, as just stated in ver. 130 (60.), they were rebellious and disc-

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VII.

in their destruction, as shall be joy over them that are persuaded to salvation.

132 (62) I answered then, and said, I know, Lord, that the most High is called merciful, in that he hath mercy upon them which are not yet come into the world,

133 (63) and upon those also that turn to his law;
^m Rom. 2. 4. 134 (64) and that ^m he is patient, and long suffereth those that have sinned, as his creatures;

135 (65) and that he is bountiful, for he is ready to give where it needeth;

136 (66) and that he is of great mercy, for he multiplieth more and more mercies to them that are present, and that are past, and also to them which are to come.

bedient. The Syriac Version puts it clearer, "wherefore there shall not be sorrow on account of their destruction." In so far as men are wicked, cruel, spiteful, false, impure, they are unworthy of love, and undeserving of regret (vii. 20—25. See also on viii. 55, 56.).

132 (62). "The most High is called merciful;" ver. 64. See, for instance, such places as Exod. xxxiv. 6. Joel ii. 13. Ps. lxxviii. 38, 39.

"In that he hath mercy upon them which are not yet come into the world." It is not quite easy to say what the writer meant by this. The Latin is supported by the Syriac Version, and if this be the true reading, the sense appears to be, that God shows himself merciful towards those whom He has not permitted to be born into so miserable and wicked a world as this. Compare Eccles. iv. 3, "Yea, better is he . . . which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun." The Æthiopic Version, however, reads, "in that He is merciful towards those who always have been as it were nothing at all," giving to the passage much the same meaning as Ps. ciii. 8, 14, "The Lord is merciful . . . For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (compare viii. 34.). The Arabic Version may perhaps be thought ambiguous, "in that He hath shewed pity towards them who never had any being;" the Armenian omits the clause.

133 (63). "He hath mercy . . . upon those also that turn to his law." Compare xvi. 67 (5 Esdras). Eccles. xvii. 24—26.

134 (64). "He is patient, and long suffereth those that have sinned, as his creatures." "Long suffereth;" compare Rom. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Ps. cxlv. 9, "His tender mercies are over all His works."

"As his creatures." Compare Is. lvii. 16; and Ps. cxxxviii. 8, Prayer-Book Version, "Despise not then the works of Thine own hands." Job x. 3; xiv. 15; Eccles. xvii. 21. See ver. 139 (69.); and viii. 7—14, 45. Compare Wisd. xi. 24, 26, "For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldest thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it."

136 (66). "To them that are present, and that are past." Those who are now living, and those who have died.

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137 (67) For if he shall not multiply his mercies, the world would not continue with them that inherit therein.

138 (68) And he pardoneth ; ^afor if he did not so ⁿ Ps. 130. 3. of his goodness, that they which have committed iniquities might be eased of them, the ten thousandth part of men should not remain living.

139 (69) And being judge, if he should not forgive them that are ²cured with his word, and put out the ² Or, *created*. multitude of ³ contentions, ³ Or, *contempts*.

140 (70) there should be very few left peradventure in an innumerable multitude.

CHAPTER VIII.

¹ Many created, but few saved. 6 He asketh why God destroyeth his own work, 26 and prayeth God to look upon the people which only serve him. 41 God answereth, that all seed cometh not to good, 52 and that glory is prepared for him and such like.

And he answered me, saying, The most High hath made this world for many, but the world to come for few.

2 I will tell thee a similitude, Esdras ; As when thou askest the earth, it shall say unto thee, that it

137 (67). "The world . . . with them that inherit therein." Read, with the manuscripts of the Latin, and the other Versions, "inhabit."

139 (69). "If he should not forgive them that are cured by his word." "Cured" seems to be merely an error of the transcribers for "created," which is rightly placed in the *Margin*, and is the reading of the manuscripts and Versions. The argument and the ground of appeal for mercy is the same as in ver. 134 (64.). Why was man made at all, if he were created but to perish ? Why should the Creator lose as it were His labour, and seem to have made man in vain ? If man, "fashioned with so great labour," were worth creating, is he not more worth preserving ? (viii. 14.).

"Put out the multitude of contentions." "Contempts;" that is, acts of contemptuous disobedience to God's law, is the reading of the manuscripts, and is rightly placed in the *Margin*.

"Put out." By forgiveness. Compare Ps. li. 1, 9. Is. xliii. 25 ; xliv. 22. Acts iii. 19.

CHAPTER VIII.

1, 3. "The most High hath made this world for many, but the world to come for few. . . . There be many created, but few shall be saved." Compare vv. 41, 55 ; vii. 20, 47*, 61* ; ix. 15, 22 ; and the words of our Lord, "Many are called, but few chosen ;" "Few there be that find it," St. Matt. xxii. 14 ; xx. 16 ; vii. 14.

2. "As when thou askest the earth, it shall say unto thee." Compare vii. 54* ; x. 9.

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giveth much mould whereof earthen vessels are made, but little dust that gold cometh of: even so is the course of this present world.

^a Matt. 20.
16.

3 ^a There be many created, but few shall be saved.

4 So answered I and said, Swallow then down, O my soul, understanding, and devour wisdom.

5 For thou hast agreed to give ear, and art willing to prophesy: for thou hast no longer space than only to live.

² Or, to give
us.

6 O Lord, if thou suffer not thy servant, that we may pray before thee, and ² thou give us seed unto our heart, and culture to our understanding, that there may come fruit of it; how shall each man live that is corrupt, who beareth the place of a man?

“Much mould . . . little . . . gold.” Compare above, vii. 55*—57*.

5. “For thou hast agreed to give ear, and art willing to prophesy.” It is difficult to say what may have been the reading of the original here; the manuscripts and the Versions vary. The Syriac Version has, “For thou comest” (i.e. into this world) “without thine own wish, and thou departest when thou dost not choose;” by which words the writer seems made to intimate that as man has no choice whether he should come into the world or not, it is hard that he should be born into a condition in which, as so few are saved, it is likely that he will perish.

6. “If thou suffer not thy servant.” “Not,” though in the printed text, is not found in the manuscripts of the Latin, or in the other Versions. The exact wording of the verse is somewhat uncertain; but the general meaning is, that Esdras asks that he might be suffered to pray that God would so transform and renew men’s corrupt hearts (iii. 20—22.), that, bringing forth the fruits of goodness, they might attain to life, and escape the evil deeds which caused them to lose the promised blessings of the world to come (vi. 116—126 (46—56.). Compare Ezek. xi. 19, 20; xxxvi. 26, 27.).

“If thou suffer thy servant to pray before thee.” These words are to the same general purpose as the words in ver. 42: “If I have found grace, let me speak;” and elsewhere (see iv. 44; xii. 7.), in which Esdras asks pardon for his seeming presumption in speaking yet again, after God had spoken. Compare Gen. xviii. 27, 30, 31, 32, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak.”

“Give us seed into our hearts.” See ix. 31, “I sow my law in you, and it shall bring fruit in you.” Our Lord uses the same figure: “The sower soweth the word” (St. Mark iv. 14.).

“That there may come fruit of it;” ix. 31. Compare St. Matt. xiii. 23. Col. i. 10. Phil. i. 11.

“Who beareth the place of a man?” The Syriac Version seems

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7 For thou art alone, and we all one workmanship of thine hands, like as thou hast said.

8 For ³when the body is fashioned now in the mother's womb, and thou givest it members, thy creature is preserved in fire and water, and nine months doth thy workmanship endure thy creature which is created in her. ² Or, *how is the body fashioned.*

9 But that which keepeth and is kept shall both be preserved: and when the time cometh, the womb preserved delivereth up the things that grew in it.

10 For thou hast commanded out of the parts of the body, that is to say, out of the breasts, milk to be given, which is the fruit of the breasts,

11 that the thing which is fashioned may be nourished for a time, till thou dispocest it to thy mercy.

12 Thou broughtest it up with thy righteousness, and nurturedst it in thy law, and reformedst it with thy judgment.

13 And thou shalt mortify it as thy creature, and quicken it as thy work.

14 If therefore thou shalt destroy him which with so great ^blabour was fashioned, it is an easy thing ^b Job 10. 8. Ps. 139. 14. &c.

to have preserved the true reading, "form of man;" the mistake of one letter for another in the Greek may have led the Latin translator to render "place."

8—14. Taken in connection with ver. 6, the argument seems intended to suggest, that if God took so great pains in fashioning the body (ver. 14. Ps. cxxxix.), it should be more worth while so to fashion and train the soul, that, instead of becoming corrupted, it might live.

8. "For when the body," &c. This is better than the reading of the printed Latin text, which is placed in the *Margin*, as the manuscripts have "since."

"Thy creature is preserved in fire and water." These seem metaphorical expressions for risks and dangers in general, as in the passages referred to in the *Note* on vii. 7.

"Thy workmanship;" i.e. the mother who beareth the child in her womb.

13. "Mortify." Cause to die, as in Rom. viii. 13. Col. iii. 5.

"Quicken." Cause to live, as in Rom. viii. 11. Eph. ii. 1, &c.

14. "It is an easy thing," &c. In this latter clause, the printed text of the Latin has obscured the point of the argument, which is retained in the manuscripts and the other Versions, though the way of expressing it varies slightly: "If thou shalt destroy him that with so great labour was fashioned, wherefore didst thou give unto

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to be ordained by thy commandment, that the thing which was made might be preserved.

15 Now therefore, Lord, I will speak; touching man in general, thou knowest best; but touching thy people, for whose sake I am sorry;

16 and for thine inheritance, for whose cause I mourn; and for Israel, for whom I am heavy; and for Jacob, for whose sake I am troubled;

17 therefore will I begin to pray before thee for myself and for them: for I see the falls of us that dwell in the land.

18 But I have heard the swiftness of the judge which is to come.

19 Therefore hear my voice, and understand my words, and I shall speak before thee.

This is the beginning of the words of Esdras, before he was taken up: and I said,

"him life at all?" Compare ver. 45; and vii. 134, 139 (64, 69.), where creation is pleaded as an argument for mercy. Ps. lxxxix. 47 (according to the old, and probably the truest, interpretation), "wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?" The words "might be preserved," at the end of the verse in the printed text, are not in the early manuscripts of the Latin or in the other Versions, and appear to have been inserted by conjecture.

15. "Man in general . . . thy people." In like manner a marked distinction is made between Israel and the rest of mankind in iv. 23; v. 23—30; vi. 55—59.

15, 16. "Thy people, for whose sake I am sorry . . . Jacob, for whose sake I am troubled." See v. 35; x. 39, 50. Compare Rom. ix. 2, 3.

"Thy people . . . and . . . thine inheritance;" ver. 45. Compare Esth. xiii. 15; xiv. 5. Deut. ix. 29; xxxii. 9. 1 Kin. viii. 51. Ps. xxviii. 9; lxxviii. 71.

"Thy people;" v. 27.

16. "Thine inheritance." Judith xiii. 5. 1 Sam. x. 1.

17. "Pray before thee for myself and for them." Compare Neh. i. 6. Dan. ix. 20.

18. "The swiftness of the judge." Compare Mal. iii. 5. Rev. xxii. 12.

"This is the beginning of the words of Esdras, before he was taken up." These words are not part of the text, but are to be taken as a marginal note, or heading of a chapter. We find this note in the Latin, Syriac, Æthiopic, and Armenian Versions; the Armenian Version, however, omits the last words, "before he was taken up."

"Before he was taken up." See xiv. 9, and the postscript at the end of the book (xiv. 49.). When Esdras had finished prophesying, he is represented as having been taken up to dwell with those like himself (iv. 36; vii. 28; xiv. 9.), the faithful servants of God, and to be with the Messiah till the times when the Messiah should be revealed.

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20 O Lord, thou that dwellest in everlastingness, which beholdest from above things in the heaven and in the air ;

21 whose throne is inestimable ; whose glory may not be comprehended ; before whom the hosts of angels stand with trembling,

22 ° whose service is conversant in wind and fire ; ^{c Ps. 104. 4.}
^{Heb. 1. 7.} whose word is true, and sayings constant ; whose commandment is strong, and ordinance fearful ;

23 whose look drieth up the depths, and indignation maketh the mountains to melt away ; which the truth witnesseth :

20—36. The Prayer of Esdras.

This passage (vv. 20—36.) is also found as an extract in various manuscripts of the Latin Bibles, the oldest of which is older than any of the manuscripts yet discovered of the entire Fourth Book of Esdras. It also formed one of the Canticles in the Mozarabic Liturgy, the ancient Gothic Prayer-Book used in Spain by the Christians to whom the Arabs allowed liberty of worship. It would seem also that one of its verses is quoted in the liturgy preserved in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, which is probably older than the third century after Christ. See on ver. 23.

20. Compare Is. lvii. 15, "The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity."

"Which beholdest from above." This passage, which in the Latin runs, "whose eyes are lifted up on high," would seem to be the place referred to by Tertullian (*De Præsc. Hær.*, iii.), a Christian writer of the second century.

22. "Wind and fire." Compare Ps. civ. 4.

"Whose word is true." 2 Sam. vii. 28. Ps. cxix. 160. Is. xxv. 1.

23. "Whose look drieth up the depths." Ps. lxxiv. 15. Nah. i. 4.

"Maketh the mountains to melt away." Judg. v. 5. Ps. xcvi. 5. Micah i. 4. Nah. i. 5. Compare Eccles. xvi. 18, 19.

"Which the truth witnesseth." Rather, "whose truth witnesseth," witnesseth, or testifieth, is used (as the words are often used elsewhere,—for instance, Acts viii. 25 ; xx. 21 ; xxvi. 22. Gal. v. 3. Eph. iv. 17. 1 Thess. iv. 6, &c.) in the sense of proclaimeth, solemnly declareth, His purpose and will. "Whose truth" (compare the preceding verse, "whose word is true, and sayings constant") : truth, the essential attribute of "God, who cannot lie." It expresses the same thought as in Num. xxiii. 19 : "Hath He said, and shall He not do it ? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ?" Compare Titus i. 2. James i. 17. 1 Esdr. iv. 40.

Though the expressions in this verse are, as may be seen by the passages referred to, such as are not unfrequently found in the Prophets, yet it would seem, from the arrangement of the clauses, most probable that this is the passage the words of which were meant to be used in one of the prayers near the beginning of the *Liturgy of St. Clement*,

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24 O hear the prayer of thy servant, and give ear to the petition of thy creature.

25 For while I live I will speak, and so long as I have understanding I will answer.

26 O look not upon the sins of thy people; but on them which serve thee in truth.

27 Regard not the wicked inventions of the heathen, but the desire of those that keep thy testimonies in afflictions.

28 Think not upon those that have walked feignedly before thee: but remember them, which according to thy will have known thy fear.

29 Let it not be thy will to destroy them which have lived like beasts; but to look upon them that have clearly taught thy law.

30 Take thou no indignation at them which are deemed worse than beasts; but love them that alway put their trust in thy righteousness and glory.

² Or, *are sick*. 31 For we and our fathers ² do languish of such

found in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, a work usually ascribed to the third century after Christ, though the liturgy contained in it is probably older; perhaps the true reading is preserved in the words as they are found in this prayer: "O thou . . . whose look drieth up the depths, "and indignation" (*lit.* threatening) "maketh the mountains to melt, "and whose truth abideth for ever" (*Apostolical Constitutions*, viii. 7.).

25. "While I live I will speak." Compare Ps. civ. 33; cxlvi. 2.

28—30. When a land is punished for its sins with any general visitation,—famine, war, pestilence,—all suffer together; the good and the bad are involved in one common calamity; in rooting up the tares, the wheat is rooted up with them. Esdras prays that God would look not so much to the evil deeds of the wicked, which might justly call down chastisement, as to the good deeds of the righteous, for whose sake He might be moved to spare His people. Compare Gen. xviii. 24, 25.

27. "Of the heathen." The word thus rendered has found its way into some of the Latin manuscripts, apparently by a mistake of the transcriber omitting at the beginning of a word a letter with which the preceding word had ended. The other manuscripts retain the true reading, "of those who do wickedly." To this purport also the other Versions.

31. "We and our fathers." Compare Ps. cvi. 6. Neh. i. 6; ix. 2. Dan. ix. 8, 16.

"Do languish of such diseases." "Diseases" is here to be taken in the sense of spiritual diseases, sins, as in Ps. xxxviii. 7. Is. i. 6; but the reading is not supported by the manuscripts of the Latin, or by the other Versions. The *Æthiopic* reads, "We have done deadly works;"

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diseases: but because of us sinners thou shalt be called merciful.

32 For if thou ² hast a desire to have mercy upon us, thou shalt be called merciful, to us namely, that have no works of righteousness. ² Or, be willing.

33 For the just, which have many good works laid up with thee, shall out of their own deeds receive reward.

34 For what is man, that thou shouldest take displeasure at him? or what is a corruptible generation, that thou shouldest be so bitter toward it?

35 ^a For in truth there is no man among them that be born, but he hath dealt wickedly; and among the faithful there is none which hath not done amiss. ^a 1 Kin. 8. 46.
² Chr. 6. 36.

36 For in this, O Lord, thy righteousness and thy goodness shall be declared, if thou be merciful unto them which have not the ³ confidence of good works. ³ Or, substance.

37 Then answered he me, and said, Some things

the Syriac, "Works of corruption." The Latin manuscripts vary, but if we may by conjecture add a syllable which seems to have dropped out, the Latin would run, "We have lived with the manners which 'bring death'" (vii. 119 (49)).

"Because of us sinners thou shalt be called merciful." Compare ver. 36. Rom. v. 8.

33. "The just, which have many good works laid up with thee;" vii. 77*, "For thee there is laid up a treasure of good works with the 'Most High,'" ix. 7. Compare Rev. xiv. 13. "Out of their own deeds 'receive reward.'" Prov. xi. 18, "To him that worketh righteousness 'shall be a sure reward.'" Compare 1 Cor. iii. 8. Rev. xxii. 12.

34. "What is man . . . a corruptible generation, that thou 'shouldest be so bitter towards it?'" The frailty and brevity of man's life is made the grounds of the appeal for deprecating severity. Compare Ps. lxxviii. 39; lxxxix. 46, 47; ciii. 14. Eccles. xviii. 8—12.

35. Compare vii. 46*, 68*, 119—122 (49—52.); iv. 38. The Psalmist makes the same complaint of the evil in his own day (Ps. xiv. 2, 3; liii. 2, 3.); and Jeremiah (see chap. v.) makes lamentation concerning the wickedness of Jerusalem. See also Ezek. xxii. 30. 1 Kin. viii. 46. Job iv. 18; xiv. 4; xv. 14—16; xxv. 4—6. Compare St. Paul, Rom. iii. 10, 23.

"Among the faithful." The reading of the Latin appears to have been, "of those who are confident;" that is, who trust, either in God, or in themselves, that they are righteous. But there is nothing in the Oriental Versions to support this reading; and it would seem as if there was found in the text from which they were translated, "those who 'have lived,'" the second clause being in parallelism with the first.

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hast thou spoken aright, and according unto thy words it shall be.

38 For indeed I will not think on the disposition of them which have sinned before death, before judgment, before destruction:

† Gen. 4. 4.

39 but ^eI will rejoice over the disposition of the righteous, and I will remember also their pilgrimage, and the salvation, and the reward, that they shall have.

40 Like as I have spoken now, so shall it come to pass.

41 For as the husbandman soweth much seed

38. "I will not think on." "Think" is here used in the sense, which it frequently has in our older writers, of fretting, worrying oneself about, as in St. Matt. vi. 25, 34, "Take no thought for the morrow."

"Before . . . before . . . before." This seems an error of the printed text; read rather, with the manuscripts of the Latin, and with the other Versions, "or . . . or . . . or:" "I will not think on . . . their death, or their judgment, or their destruction."

38, 39. "Disposition." This seems used here by our translators in the sense of disposing, ordering: "I will not be grieved at the disposition "which I have made of the wicked;" at the way in which I have disposed of them, at that which I have appointed for them. In the Latin Version, the word rendered "disposition" in ver. 39, is not the same as that so rendered in ver. 38; but the words are of similar meaning, and probably in the original there was used in both places the same Greek word,—a word which, in varying grammatical forms, frequently occurs in this book, and is rendered by some word connected with fashioning, making, creating. As, indeed, it might be rendered here, "I will not think upon the creation of them which have sinned:" I will not regret that the wicked have been created, though they be lost; but I will rejoice that the just have been created, in that they shall attain salvation. Compare vii. 60*, 61*, 131 (61.).

39. "Their pilgrimage." Compare Gen. xlvii. 9. 1 Chr. xxix. 15. Ps. xxxix. 12. Heb. xi. 13. 1 Pet. i. 17; ii. 11; and 2 (5) Esdr. xvi. 40.

41 Compare vv. 1—3. The following passage from Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, I. v., "Of a State of Moral Discipline," may be not inaptly quoted here: "But that the present world does not actually become a "state of moral discipline to many, even to the generality, i.e. that they "do not improve or grow better in it, cannot be urged as a proof that "it was not intended for moral discipline by any who at all observe the "analogy of Nature. For of the numerous seeds of vegetables and "bodies of animals which are adapted and put in the way to improve "to such a point or state of natural maturity and perfection, we do not "see, perhaps, that one in a million actually does; for the greatest part "of them decay before they are improved to it, and appear to be actually "destroyed. Yet no one, who does not deny all final causes, will deny

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upon the ground, and planteth many trees, and yet the thing that is sown good in his season cometh not up, neither doth all that is planted take root: even so is it of them that are sown in the world; they shall not all be saved.

42 I answered then and said, If I have found grace, let me speak.

43 Like as the husbandman's seed perisheth, if it come not up, and receive not thy rain in due season; or if there come too much rain, and corrupt it:

44 even so perisheth man also, which is formed with thy hands, and is called thine own image, because thou art like unto him, for whose sake thou hast made all things, and likened him unto the husbandman's seed.

45 Be not wroth with us, but spare thy people, and have mercy upon thine own inheritance: for thou art merciful unto thy creature.

"that those seeds and bodies which do attain to that point of maturity and perfection answer the end for which they were really designed by Nature, and therefore that Nature designed them for such perfection. And I cannot forbear adding, though it is not to the present purpose, that the appearance of such an amazing waste in Nature, with respect to these seeds and bodies by foreign causes, is to us as unaccountable as what is much more terrible, the present and future ruin of so many moral agents by themselves, i.e. by vice."

"Good in his season." "Good" is inserted by the translators, and is better omitted. "In his season:" "his" (see on iv. 19.).

42. "If I have found grace." Compare iv. 44; v. 56; vi. 11; vii. 102*; xiv. 22.

44. "Because thou art like unto him." Read rather, with the manuscripts of the Latin, and with the other Versions, "He" (man) "is made like unto thee." Compare Gen. i. 26, 27.

"For whose sake thou hast made all things." Compare Ps. viii. 6—8. In other places, Esdras speaks of the world as made for the sake of Israel (vi. 55, 59.), and (ix. 13.) for the righteous.

"And likened him unto the husbandman's seed." Esdras appears to protest against the analogy. Thou hast likened man, made in thine own image, for whose sake thou didst make the world, to the husbandman's seed, as if he were worth no more than it. The Æthiopic Version puts it as a question, "Dost thou compare him and value him as the husbandman's seed? that be far from thee, Lord."

45. "Spare thy people . . . thine own inheritance." Compare Joel ii. 17. See vv. 15, 16.

"Merciful unto thy creature." Compare vii. 134, 139 (64, 69.): and above, vv. 7, 14.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VIII.

46 Then answered he me, and said, Things present are for the present, and things to come for such as be to come.

^r ch. 5. 23.

47 For ^r thou comest far short that thou shouldest be able to love my creature more than I: but I have ofttimes drawn nigh unto thee, and unto it, but never to the unrighteous.

48 In this also thou art marvellous before the most High:

49 in that thou hast humbled thyself, as it becometh thee, and hast not judged thyself worthy to be much glorified among the righteous.

50 For many great miseries shall be done to them that in the latter time shall dwell in the world, because they have walked in great pride.

51 But understand thou for thyself, and seek out the glory for such as be like thee.

52 For unto you is paradise opened, the tree of

46. This present world, and the world to come, are each alike fitted for those who have to dwell therein. As this present state of trial and probation,—this world, which seems to man imperfect, full of evil and sin, with its discipline of punishment whereby so many will perish,—is fitted for men such as those who now live therein; so the future world, in its happiness and holiness, is fitted for those who shall inherit it (vii. 17.), the righteous for whose sake this present world was made (ix. 13.).

“Things to come.” “The world to come” (ver. 1.); “the time to come” (ver. 52.); “the greater world” (vii. 13.).

47. “Thou comest far short” of the true spirit of humility and submission to God’s providence and judgments.

“That thou shouldest be able to love my creature more than I.” Compare v. 23. By insinuating that it is hard and unmerciful to destroy the multitude of men because they are wicked, and were not forcibly restrained from sinning (vii. 46.), thou dost in effect claim to love mankind better than God loves them,—God, who made them.

“My creature.” See above, vv. 7, 14.

“Never to the unrighteous.” Prov. xv. 29, “The Lord is far from the wicked.” According to the other Versions, however, it would appear that the last clause of this verse should be read to this effect: “Thou hast often joined thyself to the unrighteous, though thou art not unrighteous.” Thou hast often likened thyself to the wicked, and hast made their cause thine own, by arguing on their behalf, as if there were something unjust in punishing them for their evil deeds. Compare iv. 12; vii. 62*, 63*, 116 (46.); viii. 14, 55; ix. 13.

49. Compare vv. 31, 36.

51. “Such as be like thee.” Compare ver. 62; xiv. 9, 49; iv. 36, *Note*.

52. “Paradise.” See vii. 36*, 123 (53.).

“The tree of life is planted.” Compare Rev. ii. 7, “The tree of

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VIII.

life is planted, the time to come is prepared, plenteousness is made ready, a city is builded, and rest is allowed, yea, perfect goodness and wisdom.

53 The root of evil is sealed up from you, weakness and the moth is hid from you, and corruption is fled into ² hell to be forgotten :

² Or, *the grave.*

"life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;" and Rev. xxii. 2, 14. Ecclus. xix. 19, "They that do things that please Him shall receive the fruit of the tree of immortality."

"The time to come is prepared." "The world to come," which is made but for few (ver. 1.).

"A city is builded." Compare vii. 26, *Note*; x. 27, 54; and Rev. xxi.; xxii. 14. Heb. xi. 16; xiii. 14.

"Rest is allowed;" i.e. permitted, approved of. "The Lord alloweth the righteous" (Ps. xi. 6, Prayer-Book version.). The time for trial is over, the work which God gave to be done is finished, and the time is come when He thinks it fit that His servants should rest from their labours. The Syriac has, "rest is appointed."

"Yea, perfect goodness and wisdom." The better reading seems to be, "Goodness is perfected, and wisdom made complete." Compare vi. 28; vii. 34. See also vii. 89*—98*, where there is described the sevenfold bliss of the righteous; "seven," the symbol of perfection.

53. Compare with this verse vi. 27; vii. 113, 114 (43, 44).

"The root of evil is sealed up from you" (iii. 22, "the malignity of the root." Compare Deut. xxix. 18. Heb. xii. 15.). Evil desires, the source of all misery, shall be no more. The "wicked heart" of man is often spoken of in this book; see, for instance, iii. 20, 21, 26; iv. 4, 28, 30, 31; vii. 48*: "For there hath grown up in us an evil heart, which hath made us strangers from the joys of the future world, hath led us into corruption and into the ways of death, hath shewn us the paths of perdition, and made us far off from life." See vii. 92*.

"The root of evil." Compare the Book of Enoch the Prophet (see on ii. 19.), chap. xc.: "The holy Lord shall go forth in wrath and wise punishment, that He may execute judgment upon the earth. In those days oppression shall be cut off from its roots, and the roots of iniquity and fraud together shall be cut off, and they shall perish from under heaven."

"Is sealed up from you." Surely removed, and put safe away from you. Compare vi. 20, "finished," where "sealed" is placed in the *Margin*.

"Weakness and the moth." "The moth;" Compare St. Matt. vi. 19. The word for "moth," however, appears to have found its way into some of the Latin copies by an error of the transcribers; it is not found in the other Versions. We should read, with the Syriac, "weakness is extinguished," sickness and infirmities have ceased. There is some variety in the way in which the following clauses are given in the Versions; but probably they should be read thus: "Death is hidden, and hell is fled; and corruption is forgotten, and sorrows are passed away." Compare Rev. xxi. 4: "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, VIII.

54 sorrows are passed, and in the end is shewed the treasure of immortality.

55 And therefore ask thou no more questions concerning the multitude of them that perish.

56 For when they had taken liberty, they despised the most High, thought scorn of his law, and forsook his ways.

57 Moreover they have trodden down his righteous,
f Ps. 14. 1.
 & 53. 1.
 58 and ^ssaid in their heart, that there is no God; yea, and that knowing they must die.

59 For as the things aforesaid shall receive you, so thirst and pain are prepared for them. For it was not his will that men should come to nought,

"former things are passed away." "Death" and "hell" (sometimes rendered "the grave" in the English Version): the state, power, dominion of death. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 55. Rev. xx. 13.

54. "The treasure of immortality." Compare St. Luke xii. 33, "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."

"Immortality;" vii. 96*, 113 (43.), 119, 120 (49, 50.).

55. "Ask thou no more questions concerning the multitude of 'them that perish' (ix. 13.). 'The multitude of them that perish.'" See above, vv. 1—3, 41; ix. 15; x. 9—11.

"Full many a soul, the price of blood,
 Marked by the Almighty's hand for good,
 To utter death that hour shall sweep;
 And will the saints in heaven dare weep?"

(Christian Year, Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.)

55, 56, 57, 60. "The multitude of them that perish. For . . . they "despised the most High, thought scorn of his law," &c. It will be seen that here again, as more than once before (vii. 60*, 61*, 72*, 131 (61.), *Note*; viii. 30.), the evil deeds of those who were lost are assigned as the reason why there should not be regret at their evil lot. It was a righteous retribution; they suffered that which they had deserved, and received that which they had brought upon themselves.

56. "When they had taken liberty." Rather, "received liberty." So ix. 11. Compare vii. 129 (59.): Deut. xxx. 15, 19, cited above, "I have set before thee life and death . . . therefore choose life." Compare Eccus. xv. 14—17.

56, 57. "They despised the most High . . . have trodden down the "righteous." Compare vii. 79*; and ix. 9—11.

58. "Said in their heart, that there is no God;" vii. 23.

59. "The things aforesaid;" vv. 52, 53.

"Thirst and pain are prepared for them;" ix. 9, 12. See in vii. 81*—87*, the description of the sevenfold miseries of the lost. "Thirst." Compare St. Luke xvi. 24.

"It was not his will that men should come to nought." Compare Ezek. xviii. 25, 32; xxxiii. 11, 2 Pet. iii. 9.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

60 but they which be created have defiled the name of him that made them, and were unthankful unto him which prepared life for them.

61 And therefore is my judgment now at hand.

62 These things have I not shewed unto all men, but unto thee, and a few like thee.

Then answered I and said,

63 Behold, O Lord, now hast thou shewed me the multitude of the wonders, which thou wilt begin to do in the last times: but at what time, thou hast not shewed me.

CHAPTER IX.

7 Who shall be saved, and who not. 19 All the world is now corrupted: 22 yet God doth save a few. 33 He complaineth that those perish which keep God's law: 38 and seeth a woman lamenting in a field.

HE answered me then, and said, Measure thou the time diligently in itself: and when thou seest part of the signs past, which I have told thee before,

2 then shalt thou understand, that it is the very same time, wherein the Highest will begin to visit the world which he made.

3 Therefore when there shall be seen ^aearth- ^aMatt. 24. 7. quakes and uproars of the people in the world:

4 then shalt thou well understand, that the most

60. See also ix. 11.

"Have defiled the name of him that made them." Compare Jer. xxxiv. 16. Ezek. xxxvi. 20. Lev. xviii. 21, &c.

"Were unthankful." Compare ix. 10.

"Prepared life for them." Compare St. Matt. xxv. 34.

62. "These things have I not shewed unto all men, but unto thee." Compare x. 57, 59; xii. 9, 36; xiii. 56.

"And a few like thee." Compare xiv. 26, 46, "Some things shalt thou shew secretly to the wise." "Like thee;" ver. 51.

CHAPTER IX.

1, 2. Compare St. Matt. xxiv. 33. St. Mark xiii. 29.

2. "The Highest will begin to visit the world;" v. 56; vi. 18.

3. "When there shall be seen earthquakes and uproars of the people." Compare St. Matt. xxiv. 7. The printed text of the Latin is abbreviated here. In the manuscripts, or in the other Versions, we find various additions, giving a more full enumeration of signs of disorder, such as plots of the nations, treachery of leaders, disturbance of rulers, mutual slaughters of great men, and dismay of princes.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

High spake of those things from the days that were before thee, even from the beginning.

5 For like as all that is made in the world hath a beginning and an end, and the end is manifest :

6 even so the times also of the Highest have plain beginnings in wonders and powerful works, and endings in effects and signs.

7 And every one that shall be saved, and shall be able to escape by his works, and by faith, whereby ye have believed,

8 shall be preserved from the said perils, and shall see my salvation in my land, and within my borders : for I have sanctified them for me from the beginning.

² Or, *they shall marvel.*

9 Then ²shall they be in pitiful case, which now have abused my ways : and they that have cast them away despitefully shall dwell in torments.

10 For such as in their life have received benefits, and have not known me ;

5. "Hath a beginning." The Syriac Version, by adding "known" (marked, manifest), makes clearer the parallel between this verse and ver. 6.

7. "That shall be able to escape by his works, and by faith." See viii. 33.

8. "Shall see my salvation." Compare vi. 25 ; and see viii. 52, 54.

"In my land, and within my borders : for I have sanctified them for me from the beginning." "My land," "my borders : " Judæa, the Holy Land ; the Lord's Portion ; the Lord's Land. Compare Zech. ii. 12. Deut. xxxii. 9, 43. Ps. lxxviii. 54. See also xiii. 35 ; v. 25. "My borders ;" xii. 34 ; xiii. 48.

9. "Then shall they be in pitiful case" (*Margin*, "they shall marvel"). This is the reading of the manuscripts of the Latin (so the Syriac), and is more forcible than the text. Their punishment shall be not only terrible, but strange and unlooked for, coming upon them as a surprise. Compare 1 Thess. v. 3.

"Have abused my ways." Compare viii. 56—58.

"Have cast them away despitefully." Compare, "have cast thy law behind their backs," Neh. ix. 26. Ps. l. 17. 1 Kin. xiv. 9. Ezek. xxiii. 35.

"Shall dwell in torments ;" viii. 59.

10. "Have received benefits." Compare ver. 19, *Note* ; viii. 60. Unthankfulness for God's mercies is reckoned as prominent among the characteristics of the evil. Compare St. Luke vi. 35. Rom. i. 21. 2 Tim. iii. 2. 4 Esdr. viii. 60, "were unthankful unto Him that prepared life for them."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

11 and they that have lothed my law, while they had yet liberty, and, when as yet place of repentance was open unto them, understood not, but despised it;

12 the same must know it after death by pain.

13 And therefore be thou not curious how the ungodly shall be punished, and when: but enquire how the righteous shall be saved, whose the world is, and for whom the world is created.

14 Then answered I and said,

15 I have said before, and now do speak, and will speak it also hereafter, that there be many more of them which perish, than of them which shall be saved,

16 like as a wave is greater than a drop.

17 And he answered me, saying, Like as the field is, so is also the seed; as the flowers be, such are the colours also; such as the workman is, such also is the work; and as the husbandman is himself, so is his husbandry also. For it was the time of the world,

18 ²and now when I prepared the world, which was not yet made, even for them to dwell in that now live, no man spake against me.

² And now because the time of the world was come, when I was preparing the world, &c.

11. "Have lothed my law;" vii. 24, "His law have they despised." Compare viii. 60.

"While they yet had liberty;" viii. 56. Compare vii. 72*.

"Place of repentance." Wisd. xii. 10. Heb. xii. 17.

12. "The same must know it after death by pain;" vii. 36*, 66*, 69*, 81*—87*, 117 (47.), 126 (56.); xiv. 35. Compare ver. 9; and viii. 59.

13. "For whom the world is created." Here the world is said to have been created for the sake of the righteous. In vi. 55, 59; vii. 11, it is said that the world was created for the sake of Israel; in viii. 44, for the sake of man.

15. "There be many more of them which perish, than of them which shall be saved." See viii. 1—3, 41, 55. St. Matt. vii. 14.

17. The fewness of the saved is but the natural result of the abounding of wickedness. As is the evil heart (iii. 20, 21, 26.), such are its works; a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit (St. Matt. vii. 18.).

"For it was the time of the world." These words should be joined on to the following sentence, ver. 18 (as in the *Margin*, which see). The meaning is not, however, very clear, either in the Latin or in the other Versions. The "time of the world" appears to mean, the arrival of the period when, according to the counsel and purpose of God, the world was to be created.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

² But when the world was made, both now and then the manners of every one created were corrupted by a never-failing harvest, and a law unsearchable.

19 For then every one obeyed: ²but now the manners of them which are created in this world that is made are corrupted by a perpetual seed, and by a law which is unsearchable rid themselves.

20 So I considered the world, and, behold, there was peril because of the devices that were come into it.

³ Or, grain. 21 And I saw, and spared it greatly, and have kept me a ³grape of the cluster, and a plant of a great people.

22 Let the multitude perish then, which was born

19. "For then every one obeyed." "Obeyed" is inserted by a guess of the translators. The Syriac and Æthiopic Versions read, "For there was no one;" no one existed to contradict and disobey.

"By a law which is unsearchable rid themselves." One cannot say what the translators meant by "rid themselves;" there is nothing to represent it in the Latin. A correction is attempted in the *Margin*, but the other Versions enable us to arrange the verse in a more intelligible way: "But now, though men have been created in this world, prepared (for their use), with an unfailing provision" ("table," Syriac; "harvest," Latin), "and an unsearchable law, their manners are corrupted." Esdras seems to bring in the Lord as regretting the act of creating man. Before creation there was none to disobey; but now, in spite of the blessings which God had bestowed upon man, placing him in the world with a never-failing provision to supply his needs, and a law unsearchable in its excellence to guide his actions, men became corrupted in their works. Compare Gen. vi. 5, 6.

20. "So I considered the world." The best manuscript of the Latin has, "my world;" so the Syriac. The Syriac also inserts a clause, found also in the ancient manuscript of the Latin preserved at Amiens, which adds emphasis by the repetition: "So I considered my world, and, behold, it was lost; and my earth, and, behold, there was peril because of the devices that were come into it." Compare Gen. vi. 12, "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."

21. "And spared it greatly." The ancient manuscript of the Latin now at Amiens, with the Syriac and Æthiopic Versions, reads more suitably to the context, "I spared it scarcely a very little." God, in His anger, just abstained from destroying it utterly, leaving "a very small remnant" (Is. i. 9.).

"A plant of a great people." The Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic Versions have, "out of a great forest," or "wood." The Latin translator may have intended "people," as an explanation of the metaphor. A somewhat similar figure is used in Is. xi. 1.

22. "Let the multitude perish then." Compare vii. 20; viii. 38. This is not to be taken as spoken in contemptuous indifference, but as the mournful utterance of one declaring the inevitable result of neglecting warnings and the opportunity of repentance till it was too late, and the "door was shut." See vv. 9—12; and compare Rev. xxii. 11: "He

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

in vain ; and let my ²grape be kept, and my plant ; ²Or, *grain*.
for with great labour have I made it perfect.

“ that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him
“ be filthy still ;” and Prov. i. 29—31.

We may note here, at the conclusion of this portion of the book, how in several passages, and especially in this Third Vision, the writer touches upon some deep and difficult questions in theology, to which, as speculative questions, it may not be always easy to find a satisfactory answer. Questions such as these : Would it not have been better that man had not been created (iv. 12 ; vii. 63*, 116 (46).), than that he should be created to suffer misery,—misery here, and worse misery hereafter ? (vii. 79*—87*, 117 (47.) ; viii. 55 ; ix. 12.). The very beasts that perish are better off than man, in that for them there is no fearful looking forward to judgment and punishment in the life to come (vii. 65*, 66*). Was it worth while for a God, who is merciful, to create so great a multitude of intelligent beings (vii. 64*), most of whom are to perish, while only a few will be saved ? (vii. 47* ; viii. 1, 3, 41 ; ix. 15.). Would it not have been better either not to have created man at all, or to have created him less liable to sin ? (vii. 116 (46).). What advantageth it to promise immortality and happiness, when, as a matter of fact, human nature is such that nearly all men do the things that bring death ? (iii. 20 ; iv. 30 ; vii. 67*, 68*, 119—126 (49—56).). Cannot God, in His mercy, let men off the punishment due to their iniquities ; for, if He do not, not a ten-thousandth part of those whom He hath created can live ? (vii. 134—140 (64—70).).

In these bold utterances we have the expression of perplexities which, in some shape or other, have often troubled the hearts of men. Esdras answers his own doubts and difficulties in such ways as these : The analogy of nature suggests, not only that precious things are rare (vii. 52*—55* ; viii. 2.), but that of those things which, like seeds (viii. 41.), might come to perfection, few do attain the purpose for which they were created. That man must not suppose that he is wiser or more merciful than God, or imagine in his impatience that he can see all the reasons now which may have led the Most High to act in this way or in that (iv. 2, 11, 34 ; vii. 19 ; viii. 47.). That if God thought it good so to arrange the course of things that few should be saved, it must be right and good ; and God did think it good, for the sake of the righteous (ix. 13.), to create the world in which so many of the unrighteous should perish (vii. 70*). But their perishing was their own fault. God gave them liberty (viii. 56 ; ix. 11.), and wise laws and commandments (vii. 20, 21, 72*), and left them space and opportunity for amendment (vii. 74* ; ix. 11.). But all this they neglected ; and, despising God and His ways, would not choose life, that they might live (vii. 22—25, 129 (59.) ; viii. 60.) ; so that they are without excuse (vii. 73*). They would not be at the trouble to fight bravely the battle against sin, and must take the consequences of defeat (vii. 127—129 (57—59).). Therefore they perish, as worthy of no better fate, as undeserving of regret ; and the Most High, rejoicing over the obedient and faithful who are saved, will not think upon the wicked who are lost (vii. 60*, 61*, 130, 131 (60, 61.) ; viii. 38, 39, 55.). Compare Ps. lviii. 10, 11 :

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

23 Nevertheless, if thou wilt cease yet seven days more, (but thou shalt not fast in them,

"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth."

To these vindications of God's dealings with men, made by the author of the Fourth Book of Esdras, it may seem fitting to add a few words more, with respect to any "difficulties" arising from questions such as those raised here,—the general prevalence of wickedness; the fewness of the saved. Christianity itself, so far from affording a solution to them as matters of speculation, may be thought rather to intensify their terrible significance, inasmuch as, in its clearer revelation of the future life, it discloses the fearful fate of those who lose their own souls, and are bidden, as "cursed," to depart into "everlasting fire;" and sets forth the more sore punishment of those who resist its mightier influences for good, and do "despite to the Spirit of grace" (Heb. x. 29.). Christianity gives, indeed, a sufficient practical solution of the great problem, and the practical solution is the only one that its Divine Author has thought fit to give to men, while they have only such faculties and knowledge as they possess now. When the question was asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" the answer given was, in effect, that, be they few or many, none need be lost except through their own fault. Men were bidden to "strive to enter into the strait gate," in that none who did really strive should fail; men were warned that an indolent half-hearted seeking would not suffice. All, indeed, would naturally seek for, and wish to have, the great prizes of the future life, if they could be gained without trouble, and snatched at when men chose, after any amount of procrastination and delay; but the warning was,—a warning which implied a promise,—that those who would enter in must be in earnest, must struggle as those who contend for an earthly prize which they mean, if they can, to win (St. Luke xiii. 23, 24. Rev. ii. 10. See also 4 Esdr. vii. 127, 128 (57, 58).). This practical answer is sufficient. To any who may be too curiously speculating about things which now need not or cannot be explained, the answer may still be given, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me" (St. John xxi. 22.).

It must never be forgotten that all men will be dealt with equitably, according to their opportunities and advantages, and the use, good or bad, that they have made of them. See 1 Cor. viii. 12. St. Matt. xxv. 14—29; and the constantly-recurring declaration that men will be judged according to their works, St. Matt. xvi. 27. Rom. ii. 6. Rev. xx. 12, &c. See also *Butler's Analogy*, II. vi., "Revelation not Universal."

As to the various speculations and difficulties themselves, it may be sufficient here to suggest such thoughts as may arise from the consideration of the subjoined and similar passages, from the great work of Bishop Butler, already more than once referred to: "It cannot but be acknowledged plain folly and presumption to pretend to give an account of the whole reasons of this matter; the whole reasons of our being allotted a condition out of which so much wickedness and misery . . . would, in fact, arise" (*Butler's Analogy*, I. v., "On a State of Probation as intended for Moral Discipline and Improvement").

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

24 but go into a field of flowers, where no house is builded, and eat only the flowers of the field ; taste no flesh, drink no wine, but eat flowers only ;)

25 and pray unto the Highest continually, then will I come and talk with thee.

26 So I went my way into the field which is called Ardath, like as he commanded me ; and there I sat among the flowers, and did eat of the herbs of the field, and the meat of the same satisfied me.

"Men require . . . to have all difficulties cleared. And this is, or at least, for anything we know to the contrary, may be, the same as "requiring to comprehend the Divine nature, and the whole plan of "Providence, from everlasting to everlasting" (II. viii.). The natural world, and the natural government of it, is a scheme vast and incomprehensible ; and this suggests, "that the moral world and government "of it may be so too. Indeed, the natural and moral constitution and "government of the world are so connected as to make up together but "one scheme." And, as "it is most evident that we are not competent "judges of this scheme, from the small parts of it which come within our "view in the present life," so manifold analogies "show that it is not at "all incredible that, could we comprehend the whole, we should find "the permission of the disorders objected against to be consistent with "justice and goodness, and even to be instances of them" (I. vii., "The "Government of God a Scheme Incomprehensible"). Compare Ecclus. xvi. 22, "Who can declare the works of His justice ? or who can endure "them ? for His covenant is afar off, and the trial of all things is in "the end."

23. "If thou wilt cease." Interpose an interval of seven days, in which thou shalt cease from earthly occupations and thoughts. The Æthiopic Version has, "If thou shalt pray again," as in v. 13 ; vi. 31.

"But thou shalt not fast in them." So the Latin and the Syriac ; but the Æthiopic and Arabic Versions have, "Thou shalt fast." The difference of reading may, perhaps, merely have arisen from a difference of opinion as to the meaning of "fast ;" for ver. 24 shows that Esdras, being forbidden to eat flesh or to drink wine, and enjoined to eat only the flowers of the field, was commanded, if not literally to "fast" (v. 13. 20 ; vi. 31, 35.), to practise very strict abstinence, in order to prepare himself for receiving the celestial revelations. Compare xii. 51.

ix. 26—x. 59. The Fourth Vision.

26. "The field which is called Ardath." The name is written in various ways in the Latin manuscripts. "Araat" is the reading of the Arabic Version ; "Ardab," of the Armenian ; the Syriac and the Æthiopic have "Arphad," a name found in Is. x. 9 ; xxxvi. 19 ; xxxvii. 13 (2 Kin. xviii. 34 ; xix. 13.). Jer. xlix. 23.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

27 After seven days I sat upon the grass, and my heart was vexed within me, like as before :

28 and I opened my mouth, and began to talk before the most High, and said,

29 O Lord, thou that shewest thyself unto us, thou wast ^b shewed unto our fathers in the wilderness, in a place where no man ² treadeth, in a barren place, when they came out of Egypt.

^b Ex. 19. 9.
& 24. 10.
Deut. 4. 12.
² Or, cometh.

30 And thou spakest, saying, Hear me, O Israel ; and mark my words, thou seed of Jacob.

31 For, behold, I sow my law in you, and it shall bring fruit in you, and ye shall be honoured in it for ever.

32 But our fathers, which received the law, kept it not, and observed not thy ordinances : and though the fruit of thy law did not perish, neither could it, for it was thine ;

33 yet they that received it perished, because they kept not the thing that was sown in them.

34 And, lo, it is a custom, when the ground hath received seed, or the sea a ship, or any vessel meat or drink, that, that being perished wherein it was sown or cast into,

35 that thing also which was sown, or cast therein, or received, doth perish, and remaineth not with us : but with us it hath not happened so.

36 For we that have received the law perish by sin, and our heart also which received it.

27. "After seven days." Compare v. 13, 20 ; vi. 31, 35 ; xii. 39, 51.

"My heart was vexed within me, like as before;" v. 21 ; vi. 36.

29. "In the wilderness, in a place where no man treadeth." Compare Jer. ii. 6, "Through the wilderness . . . through a land that no man passeth through, and where no man dwelt."

31. "I sow my law." See viii. 6. "Fruit." See above, viii. 6.

32. "Our fathers, which received the law, kept it not." See xiv. 30 ; and compare Acts vii. 51, 53. Neh. ix. 26, 29, &c. See also above, iii. 25, 26.

"The fruit of thy law did not perish." The translators have here followed a conjectural alteration of Junius (see on xiii. 2.), as the printed Latin text appeared to give no suitable meaning. This alteration gives correctly the sense of the true reading, as found in the manuscripts of the Latin, and in the other Versions (see ver. 37.).

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, IX.

37 Notwithstanding the law perisheth not, but remaineth in his force.

38 And when I spake these things in my heart, I looked back with mine eyes, and upon the right side I saw ^c a woman, and, behold, she mourned and wept ^c ch. 10. 44. with a loud voice, and was much grieved in heart, and her clothes were rent, and she had ashes upon her head.

39 Then let I my thoughts go that I was in, and turned me unto her,

40 and said unto her, Wherefore weepest thou? why art thou so grieved in thy mind?

41 And she said unto me, Sir, let me alone, that I may bewail myself, and add unto my sorrow, for I am sore vexed in my mind, and brought very low.

42 And I said unto her, What aileth thee? tell me.

43 She said unto me, I thy servant have been barren, and had no child, though I had an husband thirty years.

44 And those thirty years I did nothing else day and night, and every hour, but make my prayer to the Highest.

45 After thirty years God heard me thine handmaid, looked upon my misery, considered my trouble, and gave me a son: and I was very glad of him, so

37. "The law perisheth not;" ver. 32. Compare Is. xl. 8 (1 Pet. i. 25.). St. Matt. v. 18; xxiv. 35. St. Luke xvi. 17.

"Remaineth in his force." For "his," where in modern English we should use "its," see iv. 19, 21.

ix. 38—x. 28. The Vision of the Woman weeping because She had Lost her Son.

38. "Her clothes were rent, and she had ashes upon her head." Compare Josh. vii. 6. 1 Sam. iv. 12. 2 Sam. i. 2; xiii. 19. Esth. iv. 1. Job ii. 12.

41. "Sir." See on 2 Esdras ii. 44.

44. "Day and night." Our Version here, without sufficient reason, varies from the printed text of the Latin, supported by the most ancient manuscript, which has here, "night and day." Compare St. Mark iv. 27; v. 5. 2 Thess. iii. 8. The Jews began their day in the evening.

"Every hour." Add also, "and every day."

45. "Thine handmaid." So the Latin, Syriac, and Armenian. The Æthiopic and Arabic Versions have, "his handmaid."

"Looked upon my misery." Compare Gen. xxx. 23. St. Luke i. 25.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

was my husband also, and all my neighbours : and we gave great honour unto the Almighty.

46 And I nourished him with great travail.

47 So when he grew up, and came to the time that he should have a wife, I made a feast.

CHAPTER X.

¹ *He comforteth the woman in the field. 27 She vanisheth away, and a city appeareth in her place. 40 The angel declareth these visions in the field.*

AND it so came to pass, that when my son was entered into his wedding chamber, he fell down, and died.

² Or, country-men, Lat. citizens. ² Then we all overthrew the lights, and all my neighbours rose up to comfort me : so I took my rest unto the second day at night.

3 And it came to pass, when they had all left off to comfort me, to the end I might be quiet ; then rose I up by night, and fled, and came hither into this field, as thou seest.

4 And I do now purpose not to return into the city, but here to stay, and neither to eat nor drink, but continually to mourn and to fast until I die.

³ Or, speeches. 5 Then left I the ³ meditations wherein I was, and spake to her in anger, saying,

6 Thou foolish woman above all other, seest thou not our mourning, and what happeneth unto us ?

"All my neighbours." Compare St. Luke i. 58.

47. "A feast." Tobit viii. 19. St. Matt. xxii. 2, 3.

CHAPTER X.

1. See the interpretation in ver. 48.

2. "Then we all overthrew the lights." An expressive, symbolical action ; light being the emblem of rejoicing (see, for instance, Esth. viii. 16. Ps. xvii. 11.), as darkness of sorrow and mourning (Job iii. 4—6, 9. Is. viii. 22. Joel ii. 2.). Compare also 2 Sam. xiv. 7.

"My neighbours rose up to comfort me ;" Job ii. 11. St. John xi. 19.

6. A considerable portion of this chapter is quoted by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, in his first sermon on the death of his brother Satyrus, A.D. 379. He cites vv. 6—11, 15, 16, and 20—24, omitting ver. 21 and part of ver. 22, prefacing his citations with such expressions as, "It is written," or "the Scripture which saith." St. Ambrose, seeing in the woman a figure of the Church, takes the words addressed to her as addressed to each one in the general company of believers ; and enforces from them the lesson, that amidst a general mourning, personal griefs should be laid aside, and that the common sorrow should shut out the bitterness of private lamentations.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

7 How that Sion our mother is full of all heaviness, and much humbled, mourning very sore?

8 And now, seeing we all mourn and are sad, for we are all in heaviness, art thou grieved for one son?

9 For ask the earth, and she shall tell thee, that it is she which ought to mourn for the fall of so many that grow upon her.

10 For out of her came all at the first, and out of her shall all others come, and, behold, they walk almost all into destruction, and a multitude of them is utterly ²rooted out.

² Or,
abolished.

11 Who then should make more mourning than she, that hath lost so great a multitude; and not thou, which art sorry but for one?

12 But if thou sayest unto me, My lamentation is not like the earth's, because I have lost the fruit of my womb, which I brought forth with pains, and bare with sorrows;

³ But the earth after the manner of the earth, whereinto the present multitude is gone again, as it came out.

13 ³but the earth *not so*: for the multitude pre-

6—8. Something of the same thought, that in great public calamities it is selfish to bewail overmuch our own partial and private sorrows, may be traced in Jer. xlv. 3, 4.

7. "Sion our mother." Compare the passages referred to on ii. 2, 4. Ps. cxlix. 2. Joel ii. 23, "Children of Sion." The most ancient manuscript of the Latin, the Syriac and Arabic Versions, read, "the mother of us all." Compare Gal. iv. 26.

"Much humbled, mourning very sore." Compare vv. 21—23; and v. 35.

9. "Ask the earth, and she shall tell thee." Compare above, vii. 54*; viii. 2.

10. "Behold, they walk almost all to destruction." Compare vii. 47*, 61*; viii. 1, 3, 55; ix. 15.

10—14. "Out of her came all at the first." With vv. 9—14 compare v. 48, and Eccus. xl. 1, where the earth is called "the mother of all things." See also Job i. 21; and below, ver. 14. To the same purport is the well-known tale, related by the Roman historian, of one who, when he heard the oracle declare that he should be ruler who first kissed his mother, pretending to stumble as if by accident, fell down and kissed the earth, because she was the common mother of all (*L. Junius Brutus, in Livy, i. 56.*).

13. The reply seems to mean, that the earth, as an inanimate mass, feeleth no pain, as the multitude of beings on its surface come and pass away.

"But the earth not so." There is no necessity to insert anything into the ordinary Latin text, which is, "But the earth (is) according to the course, or way, of the earth; and the multitude present thereon is gone as it came."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

sent in it according to the course of the earth is gone, as it came :

14 then say I unto thee, Like as thou hast brought forth with labour ; even so the earth also hath given her fruit, namely, man, ever since the beginning unto him that made her.

15 Now therefore keep thy sorrow to thyself, and bear with a good courage that which hath befallen thee.

16 For if thou shalt acknowledge the determination of God to be just, thou shalt both receive thy son in time, and shalt be commended among women.

14. "Like as thou hast brought forth with labour; even so the "earth also hath given her fruit." This answer seems as if the writer in some way thought that the earth was not without sympathy for its creatures, and had its birth-pangs when man was brought forth.

"The earth also hath given her fruit, namely, man." Compare iii. 4; vi. 53, 54. "Man" is a judicious emendation of the translators, now found to be supported by the manuscripts and the Versions; the printed Latin text has "to man." See vii. 116 (46.), where the translators were less fortunate in their alteration.

16. "If thou shalt acknowledge the determination of God to be "just." 1 Sam. iii. 18, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him "good." Compare Job i. 21; ii. 10. Ps. xxxix. 9. Is. xxxix. 8. This rendering, "acknowledge to be just," gives the meaning to an English reader more clearly than the more literal translation, "justify," which our Version sometimes uses. For instance, St. Luke vii. 29, "All the "people . . . and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the "baptism of John" (approved of; felt and acknowledged that what God had done was right and good). St. Luke vii. 35, and St. Matt. xi. 19, "Wisdom is justified of all her children" (is appreciated; is valued aright). "That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest" (shown to be in the right), Ps. li. 4. Rom. iii. 4. Compare Milton, *Par. Lost*, i. 26, "justify the ways of God to man;" and above, iv. 18.

"Thou shalt receive thy son in time." That is, as it would seem, at the resurrection (xiv. 35. 2 Macc. vii. 11, 29.). The Armenian Version, indeed, paraphrases it in this sense: "Thy son shall rise in his time."

"Thy son" is the correction of the translators, who found here in the printed Latin text, "his counsel" (see also on xiv. 9, a similar correction.). They did not here, as they sometimes do, follow the conjecture of Junius (see on xiii. 2.), who translates, "thou shalt understand His "(God's) counsel in due time." "Son" is the reading of all the other Versions, and of the best manuscripts of the Latin; and was read by St. Ambrose in the copy from which he quotes this verse (see on ver. 6.).

"Among women." Here again the translators have made a judicious restoration (suggested to them, perhaps, though they do not refer to it in the *Margin*, by the quotation in St. Ambrose), which we now find to be supported by the manuscripts of the Latin, and the four Oriental Versions. The printed Latin text has, "in such," which may mean, "in "such things," or "among such persons."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

17 Go thy way then into the city to thine husband.

18 And she said unto me, That will I not do: I will not go into the city, but here will I die.

19 So I proceeded to speak further unto her, and said,

20 Do not so, but be counselled by me: for how many are the adversities of Sion? be comforted in regard of the sorrow of Jerusalem.

21 For thou seest that our sanctuary is laid waste, our altar broken down, our temple destroyed;

22 our psaltery is laid on the ground, our song is put to silence, our rejoicing is at an end, the light of our candlestick is put out, the ark of our cove-

20—24. These verses, with the omission of a few clauses, are quoted by St. Ambrose (see on ver. 6.).

20. "Be comforted in regard of the sorrow of Jerusalem." See vv. 6—8. Cease to dwell too selfishly on thy own sorrow, when thou dost regard the greater calamities of the holy city and its sanctuary.

21, 22. See also xii. 44, 48; and compare Lam. v. If we were to suppose that the Esdras, in whose name the author professes to write (vi. 10; vii. 2; viii. 2, 19; xiv. 1, 38.), was meant to represent the historical Esdras, who, by the favour of the King of Persia, carried up great store of rich gifts to the restored Temple at Jerusalem (Ezra vii.), this passage would obviously be singularly inappropriate to his times and circumstances. See also on iv. 26, and on iii. 1, where "Sala-thiel, who is also Esdras," the writer of this book, is made to speak of himself as living at a period long before the time of the historical Ezra.

This passage has been thought by some to intimate that the Fourth Book of Esdras was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, A.D. 70.

21. "Our sanctuary is laid waste;" xii. 44, "the low estate of our sanctuary." Compare 1 Macc. i. 39, "Her sanctuary is laid waste like a wilderness," &c. Lam. ii. 7.

"Our altar broken down." Compare Lam. ii. 7.

22. "Our psaltery is laid on the ground, our song is put to silence." Compare Is. xxiv. 8. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Rev. xviii. 22.

"Our rejoicing is at an end." Lam. v. 15, "The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning."

"The light of our candlestick is put out." Compare 1 Kin. xi. 36; xv. 4. 2 Kin. viii. 19. Ps. cxxxii. 17. Rev. ii. 5.

"The ark of our covenant is spoiled." Compare 1 Sam. iv. 18, 21, 22. As it is not expressly stated that the ark was taken away when the Temple was burned, and its treasures carried to Babylon (2 Kin. xxv. 2 Chr. xxxvi. Jer. lii. 13, 17—22.), the Jews invented a legend, that the ark was preserved and hidden by Jeremiah, in a hollow cave in the mountain where Moses "saw the heritage of God," and there remaineth unknown, "until the time that God gather His people again together" (see 2 Macc. ii. 4—7.). This legend does not appear to have been known to the writer of the Fourth Book of Esdras.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

nant is spoiled, our holy things are defiled, and the name that is called upon us is almost profaned: our children are put to shame, our priests are burnt, our Levites are gone into captivity, our virgins are defiled, and our wives ravished; our righteous men carried away, our little ones destroyed, our young men are brought in bondage, and our strong men are become weak;

23 and, which is the greatest of all, the seal of Sion hath now lost her honour; for she is delivered into the hands of them that hate us.

24 And therefore shake off thy great heaviness, and

"Our holy things are defiled." Compare Ps. lxxiv. 7; lxxix. 1. Ezek. vii. 21, 22.

"The name that is called upon us." See iv. 25, and *Note*.

"Is almost profaned." As if it seemed among the heathen that the God of Israel was not able to protect His own worship, and His sacred name, whereby His people were called. Compare *Note* on iv. 25. Deut. xxviii. 10. Josh. vii. 9, "and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" Ezek. xxxix. 25, "I will be jealous for my holy name."

"Our virgins are defiled, and our wives ravished." Lam. v. 11.

"Our young men are brought in bondage." Lam. v. 13.

23. "The seal of Sion hath now lost her honour." Our translators seem here to use "her" where we should use "its," a comparatively modern form (see on iv. 19, 21. Compare Rev. xxii. 2, "the tree of life . . . which yielded *her* fruit every month"). This is a difficult verse; such variations as there are in the other Versions do not much affect the general sense, or help us to explain what is meant by the "seal of Sion." Possibly "the seal of Sion" may be intended to denote the presence and protection of Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had chosen Sion, and, as it were, sealed it as His own abiding place, making it sure and precious to Himself for ever (1 Kin. ix. 3. Ps. xlviii. 3; lxviii. 16; lxxviii. 69. Eccles. xxiv. 8—12. xxxvi. 10—13.). For this metaphorical use of seal and sealing, compare Cant. viii. 6. Jer. xxii. 24. Hag. ii. 23. 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13; iv. 30. When Sion was desolate, and delivered into the hands of her enemies, this seal seemed broken and lost. We can better understand the feelings of a Jew, in writing such a passage as vv. 21—23, by contrasting, for instance, Ps. cxxxii. 13—17:—

"The Lord hath chosen Sion;

"He hath desired it for His habitation.

"This is My rest for ever:

"Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

"I will abundantly bless her provision:

"I will satisfy her poor with bread.

"I will also clothe her priests with salvation:

"And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

"There will I make the horn of David to bud;

"I have ordained a lamp for Mine anointed."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

put away the multitude of sorrows, that the Mighty may be merciful unto thee again, and the Highest shall give thee rest and ease from thy labour.

25 And it came to pass, while I was talking with her, behold, her face upon a sudden shined exceedingly, and her countenance glistened, so that I was afraid of her, and mused what it might be.

26 And, behold, suddenly she made a great cry very fearful: so that the earth shook at the noise of the woman.

27 And I looked, and, behold, the woman appeared unto me no more, but there was a city builded, and a large place shewed itself from the foundations:

then was I afraid, and cried with a loud voice, and said,

28 Where is ^a Uriel the angel, who came unto me ^{a ch. 4. 1.} at the first? for he hath caused me to fall ² into ^{2 Or, into the multitude in a trance.} many trances, and mine end is turned into corruption, and my prayer to rebuke.

29 And as I was speaking these words, behold, he came unto me, and looked upon me.

30 And, lo, I lay as one that had been dead, and mine understanding was taken from me: and he took me by the right hand, and comforted me, and set me upon my feet, and said unto me,

27. "The woman appeared unto me no more, but there was a city "builded." See ver. 44. Compare Rev. xxi. 2, "I saw the holy city . . . prepared as a bride."

28. "Uriel." See iv. 1.

29. "As I was speaking . . . he came unto me." Compare Dan. ix. 20, 21.

30, 31. Compare v. 14, 15; xii. 3, 5; and Dan. x. 8, 9, 16—19, from which this passage is imitated. See also Dan. viii. 17, 27.

30. "I lay as one that had been dead." Compare Rev. i. 17, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."

"He took me by the right hand." Compare Dan. viii. 18; x. 10. Rev. i. 17.

"And comforted me;" i.e. "strengthened me" (compare v. 15; xii. 6, where see *Note*). "Comfort" is used in these places in its Latin sense, now obsolete in modern English. The same word occurs in the Latin Version (Vulgate) of the passage in Daniel already referred to (Dan. x. 18, 19; xi. 1.), where the English Version has "strengthen" and "confirm." Dan. x. 18, "Then there came . . . one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

31 What aileth thee? and why art thou so disquieted? and why is thine understanding troubled, and the thoughts of thine heart?

32 And I said, Because thou hast forsaken me, and yet I did according to thy ^b words, and I went into the field, and, lo, I have seen, and yet see, that I am not able to express.

33 And he said unto me, Stand up manfully, and I will advise thee.

34 Then said I, Speak on, my lord, in me; only forsake me not, lest I die frustrate of my hope.

35 For I have seen that I knew not, and hear that I do not know.

36 Or is my sense deceived, or my soul in a dream?

37 Now therefore I beseech thee that thou wilt ² Or, *trance*. shew thy servant of this ² vision.

38 He answered me then, and said, Hear me, and I shall inform thee, and tell thee wherefore thou art afraid: for the Highest will reveal many secret things unto thee.

³ Or, *purpose*. 39 He hath seen that thy ³ way is right: for that thou sorrowest continually for thy people, and makest great lamentation for Sion.

40 This therefore is the meaning of the vision which thou lately sawest:

41 Thou sawest a woman mourning, and thou beganest to comfort her:

"He set me upon my feet;" v. 15; vi. 13; xiv. 2. Ezek. ii. 2; iii. 24. Dan. viii. 18.

32. "I did according to thy words, and I went into the field;" ix. 24, 26.

33. "Stand up;" vi. 13.

34. "Speak on, my lord, in me." "My lord." Compare iv. 3, 5; v. 33. See *Note* on 2 Esdr. ii. 44. "In me" is a mistake of the printed Latin; the manuscripts omit it.

38. "The Highest will reveal many secret things unto thee;" ver. 59. Compare xii. 36; xiii. 56.

39. "He hath seen that thy way is right." Compare vi. 32; xiii. 54, 55.

"Thou sorrowest continually for thy people;" ver. 50; v. 33, 35; viii. 15, 16. Rom. ix. 1—3.

40—54. The Interpretation of the Vision of the Woman and the City.

41, 49. "Beganest." See on iii. 11, where there is another of these obsolescent forms, "leftest."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

42 but now seest thou the likeness of the woman no more, but there appeared unto thee a city builded.

43 And whereas she told thee of the death of her son, this is the ² solution :

² Or, interpretation.

44 This woman, whom thou sawest, is Sion : and whereas she said unto thee, even she whom thou seest as a city builded,

45 whereas, *I say*, she said unto thee, that she hath been thirty years barren : those are the thirty years wherein there was no offering made in her.

46 But after thirty years Solomon builded the city, and offered offerings : and then bare the barren a son.

47 And whereas she told thee that she nourished him with labour : that was the dwelling in Jerusalem.

48 But whereas she said unto thee, That my son coming into his marriage chamber happened to have

42, 44. See ver. 27.

45, 46. "Thirty years wherein there was no offering . . . But after "thirty years Solomon builded the city." "Thirty" here seems to have crept into the Latin printed text through a mistake occasioned by the preceding "thirty years." The Syriac and Arabic Versions, and some manuscripts of the Æthiopic, have in both verses preserved the true reading, three thousand. Three thousand appears also to be the reading of the most important manuscript of the Latin, though as three thousand is sometimes written *III*, the transcribers of some of the Latin manuscripts, not observing the line over the *III*, have written, "three "years." The dedication of Solomon's Temple was dated B.C. 1,004, three thousand years after the creation of the world, on the supposition that the date of the creation of the world was B.C. 4,004. Josephus, who, however, is not quite consistent with himself (compare *Antiq.* VIII. iii. 1, with XX. x. 1.), reckons 3,102 years from the time of Adam to the building of Solomon's Temple.

45. "Thirty years barren;" ix. 43.

"Wherein there was no offering." More than thirty years before the dedication of the Temple, the ark had been carried up by David to Sion, the city of David (2 Sam. v. 7. 1 Kin. viii. 1.), and sacrifices had been offered before the Lord (2 Sam. vi. 17.); but the writer does not care to include this period of preparation, during which the ark of God "dwelled within curtains" (2 Sam. vii. 2.).

46. "Solomon builded the city, and offered offerings." The city seems to be looked upon as altogether subordinate to the Temple, though Solomon, during many years, was engaged in erecting other costly buildings (1 Kin. vii. 1—12.).

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, X.

a fall, and died : this was the destruction that came to Jerusalem.

49 And, behold, thou sawest her likeness, and because she mourned for her son, thou beganest to comfort her : and of these things which have chanced, these are to be opened unto thee.

50 For now the most High seeth that thou art grieved unfeignedly, and sufferest from thy whole heart for her, so hath he shewed thee the brightness of her glory, and the comeliness of her beauty :

51 and therefore I bade thee remain in the field where no house was builded :

52 for I knew that the Highest would shew this unto thee.

53 Therefore I commanded thee to go into the field, where no foundation of any building was.

54 For in the place wherein the Highest beginneth to shew his city, there can no man's building be able to stand.

55 And therefore fear not, let not thine heart be affrighted, but go thy way in, and see the beauty and greatness of the building, as much as thine eyes be able to see :

56 and then shalt thou hear as much as thine ears may comprehend.

49. "Beganest;" ver. 41.

50. "Thou art grieved unfeignedly (see ver. 39.) . . . the brightness of her glory." See ver. 55. Compare Is. liv. 11, 12; lx. 13, 15; lxii. 3. The pious Israelite, in the season of the desolation of Zion, comforted himself with dwelling on the prophecies of the future glory of his people. It would seem that Esdras, like other Jews (Acts i. 6.), understood these glowing predictions too exclusively in a temporal sense.

51. See ix. 54.

54. "No man's building be able to stand." Compare Dan. ii. 44, where a similar thought is expressed under a different figure.

55. "Fear not." Dan. x. 12, 19.

55. "The beauty and greatness of the building;" ver. 44. Compare Tobit xiii. 16—18, "For Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires, and emeralds, and precious stone: thy walls and towers and battlements with pure gold. And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl and carbuncle and stones of Ophir. And all her streets shall say, Alleluia." See also Tobit xiv. 5. Compare Is. liv. 11, 12, "I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones;" and Rev. xxi. 10—21, "He shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem," &c. Compare ver. 50.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XI.

57 For thou art blessed above many other, and
art called with the Highest; and so are but few.

² Or, art
called to be
with, &c.

58 But to morrow at night thou shalt remain here;

59 and so shall the Highest shew thee visions of
the ³ high things, which the most High will do unto
them that dwell upon earth in the last days.

³ Or, last
things.

So I slept that night and another, like as he com-
manded me.

CHAPTER XI.

1 *He seeth in his dream an eagle coming out of the sea, 37 and a lion out
of a wood talking to the eagle.*

THEN saw I a dream, and, behold, there came up
from the sea an eagle, which had twelve feathered
wings, and three heads.

57, 59. "Thou art blessed above many other . . . so shall the Highest
shew thee visions;" ver. 38. Compare viii. 62; xii. 9, 36; xiii. 56.

59. "The high things;" or, as the *Margin* translates, "last things."
This reading seems to have arisen from an error of transcription in the
Latin. We find from the other Versions, and from the manuscripts, that
the original was to this effect: "The Highest shall shew thee in dreams,
visions of those things which the Most High will do," &c. "Dreams;"
xi. 1; xiii. 1.

CHAPTER XI.

xi., xii. The Fifth Vision: The First Dream.

xi.—xii. 35. The Dream of the Eagle and the Lion.

xi. 1—35. The Vision of the Eagle with many Wings and
three Heads.

1. "Then saw I a dream." The Oriental Versions add, "on the
second night."

"There came up from the sea." Compare Dan. vii. 3. Rev. xiii. 1.
"Sea" here may perhaps mean the confusion and disorder of wars and
revolutions, out of which, from time to time, there arises some great
conqueror, or mighty empire. Some have interpreted Rev. xxi. 1,
"there was no more sea," as signifying the unbroken calm and peace of
heaven, in which there was no more restlessness, nor war, nor strife.

"An eagle." The eagle was the well-known figure on the Roman
standard, and there seems no doubt that it is intended here to denote
the Roman Empire. Not that the mere emblem of the eagle would
by itself prove this, for the fierce and mighty bird of prey might be
fitly used to denote any of the great rapacious empires of former times.
Nisroch (2 Kin. xix. 37. Is. xxxvii. 38.), the god of the Assyrians, is
with great probability supposed, from its name, to be the eagle-headed
figure so prominent on the Assyrian monuments. The invaders of
Palestine are compared to the eagle (Jer. iv. 13; xlviii. 40; xlix. 22.
Hab. i. 8.); and the King of Babylon is described by the prophet
Ezekiel (xvii. 3, 12.), as "a great eagle with great wings, . . . full of fea-
thers, which had divers colours;" while the King of Egypt is described

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XI.

2 And I saw, and, behold, she spread her wings over all the earth, and all the winds of the air blew on her, and were gathered together.

as "another great eagle with great wings and many feathers" (ver. 7.). These passages of Ezekiel may perhaps have suggested the symbol here, by which is denoted the Roman Empire. In xi. 39; xii. 11, it is expressly said, that this eagle is the fourth kingdom of Dan. vii.; while the extent and completeness of the dominion assigned to the eagle (vv. 6, 12, 32, 40.), like the resistless power assigned to the fourth beast (Dan. vii. 7.), are appropriate to no other power of the latter times,—the times in which the Messiah, the Anointed, was to appear (xi. 37; xii. 31, 32.).

When, however, we come to attempt the interpretation of details, we are beset with difficulties. What period or periods in the history of Rome are we to understand by this eagle, with three heads and twelve wings, out of which grew eight smaller wings? The twelve wings (interpreted in xii. 14 to be "twelve kings"), might at first sight be taken to denote the "twelve Cæsars;" and in support of this view, ver. 17, and xii. 15, may be brought forward as according with the long reign of Augustus (B.C. 27—A.D. 14.); but there is nothing else which seems in any way specially appropriate to the other emperors. As there still remain, after the destruction of the twelve wings and two of the smaller wings, the six remaining lesser wings and the three heads (vv. 22, 23.), one scheme of interpretation would bring down the date of the book to the beginning of the third century after Christ; but this late date is out of the question, for the book was known long before this, as it is quoted in the Epistle of Barnabas, and by Clement of Alexandria (see v. 5, 35.).

Many variations of this view are adopted. The eight smaller wings are made out to be sundry rulers of provinces, rebels and competitors for empire; and the three heads are taken to be the three emperors of the Flavian family,—Vespasian, and his two sons Titus and Domitian. Domitian was assassinated, A.D. 96. Or, the twelve wings and eight smaller wings are supposed to represent various rulers and chief personages in Roman history, from the earliest period, from the time of the kings; while the three heads represent Sulla, Pompey, and Cæsar. In support of this interpretation of the three heads, it is alleged that the circumstances attending their death fall in with the statements in xii. 26—28 (see *Note*).

Another elaborate scheme of interpretation would make the three heads to be Julius Cæsar, Antony, and Octavius, and the fourth beast to be the Greek Empire. The first wing is taken to be Alexander the Great, who passed away leaving no successor like himself (xi. 13.); the second wing is taken to be Seleucus Nicator (323—280 B.C.); and the other wings are interpreted of his descendants the Seleucidæ, who, with more or less power, reigned in the East some two hundred and sixty years, till by the interference of the Romans, symbolized by the waking up of the three heads (vv. 29, 30.), the last of them, Seleucus Asiaticus, was deprived of the remains of his dominions, about B.C. 65. Against this scheme many objections might be urged, and vv. 6, 40, which speak of the vast power and wide dominion of the eagle, in words which are quite inapplicable to such a dynasty as that of the Seleucidæ, would seem to be conclusive against it. It must in fact be confessed, that, if the writer

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XI.

3 And I beheld, and out of her feathers there grew other contrary feathers; and they became little feathers and small.

4 But her heads were at rest: the head in the midst was greater than the other, yet rested ² it with ² Lat. *she*. the residue.

5 Moreover I beheld, and, lo, the eagle flew with her feathers, and reigned upon earth, and over them that dwelt therein.

6 And I saw that all things under heaven were subject unto her, and no man spake against her, no, not one creature upon earth.

7 And I beheld, and, lo, the eagle rose upon her talons, and spake to her feathers, saying,

8 Watch not all at once: sleep every one in his own place, and watch by course:

9 but let the heads be preserved for the last.

10 And I beheld, and, lo, the voice went not out of her heads, but from the midst of her body.

had any intention of describing definite historical personages or events under the emblem of these wings and heads of the eagle, the attempts hitherto made at interpreting his allusions are mere guesswork; no consistent interpretation of the whole has yet been found possible. The general purport of the vision is, however, distinct and clear; the power of the heathen world,—the Roman Empire,—after lasting on through successive rulers, is represented as at last, when at the height of its greatness and wickedness (xi. 41—46; xii. 24, 25.), beaten down and destroyed by the Anointed at His coming.

2. "All the winds of the air blew." Compare xiii. 2. Dan. vii. 2.

"And were gathered together." The Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic Versions read, "and the clouds were gathered together unto her." "The clouds:" the symbol of sovereignty and dominion (compare xiii. 3, *Margin and Note*).

3, 11. "Contrary feathers;" or, wings. By "contrary" the Latin would seem perhaps to mean, distinct, separate from those out of which they grew. In ver. 23, they are called "little wings;" but the English Version makes some confusion, by rendering the word in vv. 22 and 24, "little feathers." In xii. 19, we have, "small under feathers" (see also xi. 25, 31.). "Small wings" is the general rendering of the other Versions. The Æthiopic translates, "heads;" that is, points, extremities.

4. "Her heads were at rest: the head in the midst greater than the other two." See ver. 29; xii. 22, 26.

6. "No man spake against her, no, not one creature upon earth." Compare Exod. xi. 7. Josh. x. 21. Judith xi. 19.

10. "The voice went not out of her heads." The heads were not yet awaked (ver. 29.).

"From the midst of her body;" xii. 17.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XI.

11 And I numbered her contrary feathers, and, behold, there were eight of them.

12 And I looked, and, behold, on the right side there arose one feather, and reigned over all the earth ;

13 and so it was, that when it reigned, the end of it came, and the place thereof appeared no more : so the next following stood up, and reigned, and had a great time ;

14 and it happened, that when it reigned, the end of it came also, like as the first, so that it appeared no more.

15 Then came there a voice unto it, and said,

16 Hear thou that hast borne rule over the earth so long : this I say unto thee, before thou beginnest to appear no more,

17 there shall none after thee attain unto thy time, neither unto the half thereof.

18 Then arose the third, and reigned as the other before, and appeared no more also.

19 So went it with all the residue one after another, as that every one reigned, and then appeared no more.

20 Then I beheld, and, lo, in process of time the feathers that followed stood up upon the right side, that they might rule also ; and some of them ruled, but within a while they appeared no more :

11. "Her contrary feathers." That is, the smaller wings growing out of the others, but distinct from them (see ver. 3.).

16. "Before thou beginnest to appear no more." That is, to disappear, to perish. Compare ver. 45.

17. Compare ver. 13, "Reigned, and had a great time." See also xii. 15. Those who would interpret this second wing to mean Augustus urge in support of their view, the long time that he held supreme power : he was proclaimed Augustus, B.C. 27, and died A.D. 14.

19. "With all the residue." The other Versions read, "all the wings;" and this reading is preserved also by one important manuscript of the Latin. The variation of the reading in the Latin might arise from the omission or insertion of a single letter (i).

20. "The feathers that followed stood up upon the right side." We should have expected to read here, "upon the left side," the wings on the right having been already spoken of (ver. 12.). Some manuscripts of the Æthiopic Version do read, "on the left side," and they may possibly preserve the true reading. The Syriac Version, however, reads, "And, lo, in process of time, the little wings (ver. 3.) also rose up on the

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XI.

21 for some of them were set up, but ruled not.

22 After this I looked, and, behold, the twelve feathers appeared no more, nor the two little feathers :

23 and there was no more upon the eagle's body, but three heads that rested, and six little wings.

24 Then saw I also that two little feathers divided themselves from the six, and remained under the head that was upon the right side : for the four continued in their place.

25 And I beheld, and, lo, the feathers that were under the wing thought to set up themselves, and to have the rule.

26 And I beheld, and, lo, there was one set up, but shortly it appeared no more.

27 And the second was sooner away than the first.

28 And I beheld, and, lo, the two that remained thought also in themselves to reign :

29 and when they so thought, behold, there awaked one of the heads that were at rest, namely, it that was in the midst ; for that was greater than the two other heads.

“right side.” If this be the true reading, it prepares the way for what is said about these “little wings” in vv. 21, 22, and the following verses, and renders it less abrupt.

21. It has been thought that possibly there may be allusion here to the Emperors Galba, Otho, Vitellius, who all three reigned for a brief period, and died violent deaths, in the year 69 A.D.

22. “The two little feathers.” Omit “the;” nothing has been said previously of any two of the little wings as distinct from the rest. The perishing of these two smaller wings is spoken of again (xii. 21.).

23. “Three heads.” The printed Latin text reads “two;” but the translators took upon themselves to alter here an obvious mistake, anticipating the reading which is now found to be that of the best manuscripts of the Latin and of the other Versions.

24. “Remained under the head that was upon the right side.” Nothing more is said in this place concerning the fate of these two smaller wings, but further on (xii. 2.) they appear again, and survive the last of the heads, so that they seem to be the kingdoms small and full of trouble, which were kept unto the end (xii. 21, 29, 30.).

25. “The feathers that were under the wing.” This is a somewhat confusing translation for the single word in the Latin, which here and in ver. 31, and xii. 29, would have been better rendered “under-wings,” that is, secondary or smaller wings. And the meaning is made clearer by restoring the reading of the manuscripts of the Latin, supported by the other Versions, “these under-wings;” that is, the four smaller wings spoken of in ver. 24. The Syriac has, “these four small wings.”

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30 And then I saw that the two other heads were joined with it.

31 And, behold, the head was turned with them that were with it, and did eat up the two feathers under the wing that would have reigned.

32 But this head put the whole earth in fear, and bare rule in it over all those that dwelt upon the earth with much oppression; and it had the governance of the world more than all the wings that had been.

33 And after this I beheld, and, lo, the head that was in the midst suddenly appeared no more, like as the wings.

34 But there remained the two heads, which also in like sort ruled upon the earth, and over those that dwelt therein.

35 And I beheld, and, lo, the head upon the right side devoured it that was upon the left side.

36 Then I heard a voice, which said unto me, Look before thee, and consider the thing that thou seest.

37 And I beheld, and lo as it were a roaring lion chased out of the wood: and I saw that he sent out a man's voice unto the eagle, and said,

38 Hear thou, I will talk with thee, and the Highest shall say unto thee,

39 Art not thou it that remainest of the four beasts, whom I made to reign in my world, that the end of their times might come through them?

31. "The two feathers under the wing." That is, the two smaller or subsidiary wings (see on ver. 25.), which remained (ver. 28.) of the four (vv. 24, 25.); of which two (vv. 26, 27.) had already disappeared, and now the remaining two are devoured.

36—xii. 3. The appearance of the Lion out of the Wood, that rebuketh the Eagle, and causeth it to perish.

37. "A roaring lion." See xii. 31.

"Chased out of the wood." "Chased" suggests an image, which is quite unsuitable here, of a lion hunted unwillingly out of his hiding-place. A better rendering would be, "rising up," or "arousing himself up." Compare xii. 31, "rising up out of the wood."

39. "The four beasts." See Dan. vii. 3—7; and below, xii. 11.

"That the end of their times might come through them." The Latin, by wrongly inserting "their," which is omitted by all the other

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40 And the fourth came, and overcame all the beasts that were past, and had power over the world with great fearfulness, and over the whole compass of the earth with much wicked oppression; and so long time dwelt he upon the earth with deceit.

41 For the earth hast thou not judged with truth.

42 For thou hast afflicted the meek, thou hast hurt the peaceable, thou hast loved liars, and destroyed the dwellings of them that brought forth fruit, and hast cast down the walls of such as did thee no harm.

43 Therefore is thy wrongful dealing come up unto the Highest, and thy pride unto the Mighty.

44 The Highest also hath looked upon the proud times, and, behold, they are ended, and his abominations are fulfilled.

45 And therefore appear no more, thou eagle, nor thy horrible wings, nor thy wicked feathers, nor thy malicious heads, nor thy hurtful claws, nor all thy vain body:

46 that all the earth may be refreshed, and may return, being delivered from thy violence, and that she may hope for the judgment and mercy of him that made her.

Versions, confuses the meaning, which otherwise is sufficiently clear. These four beasts are taken to represent the successive kingdoms of the world, during the period of whose existence the world should last, unto the end of the times, and the coming of one like unto the Son of man (Dan. vii. 13. Compare Dan. ii. 44.).

40. "The fourth . . . overcame all the beasts that were past." Compare Dan. vii. 7. The Syriac, Arabic, and Armenian Versions suggest to us that this verse, like the verses which precede and follow, should be read throughout, not in the third person, but in the second person, as it forms part of the address of the lion to the eagle: "And thou, the fourth beast, when thou camest didst overcome all the beasts that were past, and hast power over the world . . . and all this long while hast thou dwelt in the world with deceit, and hast not judged the earth with truth."

44. Compare xii. 25. "Proud times." "Proud" is found only in the Latin, and should probably be omitted.

"Abominations" appears to be an error of some of the Latin scribes. The oldest manuscript of the Latin has "ages;" and so all the other Versions: "The Lord looked upon the times, and behold they are ended, and the ages are fulfilled."

45. "Appear no more." So ver. 15; xii. 2, 3. Utterly perish and disappear.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XII.

CHAPTER XII.

3 *The eagle, which he saw, is destroyed.* 10 *The vision is interpreted.*
37 *He is bid to write his visions, 39 and to fast, that he may see more.*
46 *He doth comfort those that were grieved for his absence.*

And it came to pass, whiles the lion spake these words unto the eagle, I saw,

2 and, behold, the head that remained and the four wings appeared no more, and the two went unto it, and set themselves up to reign, and their kingdom was small, and full of uproar.

3 And I saw, and, behold, they appeared no more, and the whole body of the eagle was burnt, so that the earth was in great fear :

then awaked I out of the trouble and trance of my mind, and from great fear, and said unto my spirit,

4 Lo, this hast thou done unto me, in that thou searchest out the ways of the Highest.

5 Lo, yet am I weary in my mind, and very weak in my spirit ; and little strength is there in me, for the great fear wherewith I was affrighted this night.

6 Therefore will I now beseech the Highest, that he will comfort me unto the end.

CHAPTER XII.

2. The present text appears to be formed by a conjectural emendation of the translators, who were naturally perplexed by the reading of the printed Latin text, "There appeared no more those four wings which went over unto him (the head), and set themselves up to reign," &c., as this seemed in direct contradiction to xi. 24, which speaks of *two* of the smaller wings remaining under the head that was upon the right side. This, however, can hardly be considered a successful emendation, as the four wings had disappeared (xi. 24—31.) at an earlier period of the vision, while the three heads were remaining. Here, as in so many other places, the true reading is preserved in the Oriental Versions : "And behold the head that remained perished suddenly, and then those two wings which went unto it (xi. 24.), set themselves up to reign," &c. See below, vv. 21, 29, 30.

2. "Their kingdom was small, and full of uproar." Comp. ver. 30.

3. "Behold, they appeared no more." The writer having, it would seem, given an outline of the history of the fourth kingdom, under the figure of the eagle, down to his own times, now predicts the passing away of its last remaining fragments, as the coming of the Anointed draweth nigh. For these two small wings left to the last, see vv. 29, 30.

"Then awaked I out of the trouble." On account of the trouble of my mind. Compare xiii. 13; and ver. 5.

5. Compare v. 14; and x. 30, "And, lo, I lay as one that had been dead."

6. "That he will comfort me unto the end." "Comfort" is here

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7 And I said, Lord that bearest rule, if I have found grace before thy sight, and if I am justified with thee before many others, and if my prayer indeed be come up before thy face;

8 comfort me then, and shew me thy servant the interpretation and plain difference of this fearful vision, that thou mayest perfectly comfort my soul.

9 For thou hast judged me worthy to shew me the last times.

10 And he said unto me, This is the interpretation of the vision:

11 The eagle, whom thou sawest come up from the sea, is the kingdom which was seen in the ^avision of ^aDan. 7. 7. thy brother Daniel.

12 But it was not expounded unto him, therefore now I declare it unto thee.

used in its original Latin sense, "strengthen me;" as in ver. 8; v. 15; x. 30, see *Note*. Compare Song of Solomon ii. 5. This sense is not unfrequent in older writers; thus, leaders in battle are spoken of as comforting (encouraging) their men to fight bravely; and Wicliffe renders Eph. vi. 10 ("Be strong in the Lord"), "Be ye comforted in the Lord."

7. "Lord that bearest rule;" iii. 4; iv. 38, &c.

"If I have found grace before thy sight, and if I am justified with thee before many others." Compare x. 57; xiii. 54—56. "If I have found grace before thy sight." See iv. 44; viii. 42.

8. "That thou mayest perfectly comfort my soul." The word here rendered "comfort" is not the same as that which is found at the beginning of the verse, "comfort me then," and in ver. 6; here "comfort" is given as the translation of a verb which signifies to console.

9. "Thou hast judged me worthy to shew me the last times." Compare ver. 36; viii. 62; x. 57, 59; xiii. 55, 56.

10—35. The Interpretation of the Vision of the Eagle and the Lion.

11. "The eagle . . . is the kingdom." We should here read, "is the fourth kingdom." "Fourth" has fallen out of most of the copies of the Latin, but has been preserved by all the other Versions, and by the ancient manuscript of the Latin (of the ninth century) now in the library at Amiens.

"In the vision of thy brother Daniel" (Dan. vii. 7.). According to the note of time given in iii. 1, Salathiel, who is also Esdras, the author of this book, was contemporary with Daniel. The thirtieth year after the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians would be 558 B.C., and Daniel lived after the taking of Babylon, and the death of Belshazzar, which is assigned to 538 B.C., some twenty years later.

12. "It was not expounded unto him, therefore now I declare it unto thee." The vision was expounded unto Daniel, and in a differ-

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XII.

13 Behold, the days will come, that there shall rise up a kingdom upon earth, and it shall be feared above all the kingdoms that were before it.

14 In the same shall twelve kings reign, one after another :

15 whereof the second shall begin to reign, and shall have more time than any of the twelve.

16 And this do the twelve wings signify, which thou sawest.

17 As for the voice which thou heardest speak, and that thou sawest not to go out from the heads, but from the midst of the body thereof, this is the interpretation :

18 That after the time of that kingdom there shall arise great strivings, and it shall stand in peril of falling : nevertheless it shall not then fall, but shall be restored again to his beginning.

19 And whereas thou sawest the eight small under feathers sticking to her wings, this is the interpretation :

20 That in him there shall arise eight kings, whose times shall be but small, and their years swift.

21 And two of them shall perish, the middle time approaching : four shall be kept until their end

ent way from the manner in which it is expounded here ; and this is in fact just what is said here, when we bring back the true reading, the reading of the Latin manuscripts supported by the other Versions, which have "as" instead of "therefore : " "It was not expounded unto him in "the same way as I now declare it unto thee."

15. See xi. 13, 17 ; and the *Note* on xi. 1.

18. "After the time of that kingdom." "After," the reading of the Latin, does not fit in with the imagery of the vision, which makes the voice to proceed out of the midst of the body of the eagle (ver. 17 ; xi. 10.). The other Versions have, "In the midst of the time," or, "during "the time of that kingdom."

"His beginning." "*His*:" ver. 23, "*his* last days." See on iv. 19, 21. According to modern usage, we should say, "its beginning." "Beginning:" a better rendering would be "first estate," "former dominion." The other Versions give the meaning of the Greek word which was in the original better than the Latin.

20. "In him;" or, as we should now say, "in it;" that is, the kingdom. Compare ver. 18, "*his* beginning ;" ver. 23, "*his* last days."

21. "Two of them shall perish ;" xi. 22.

"The middle time ;" that is, of the duration of the kingdom.

"Four shall be kept until their end begin to approach." As all things must of necessity last on till their end come, this is somewhat

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begin to approach : but two shall be kept unto the end.

22 And whereas thou sawest three heads resting, this is the interpretation :

23 In his last days shall the most High raise up three kingdoms, and renew many things therein, and they shall have the dominion of the earth,

24 and of those that dwell therein, with much oppression, above all those that were before them : therefore are they called the heads of the eagle.

25 For these are they that shall accomplish his wickedness, and that shall finish his last end.

26 And whereas thou sawest that the great head appeared no more, it signifieth that one of them shall die upon his bed, and yet with pain.

27 For the two that remain shall be slain with the sword.

28 For the sword of the one shall devour the other : but at the last shall he fall through the sword himself.

29 And whereas thou sawest two feathers under

unmeaning. There does not appear any reason why the translators should have varied from the printed Latin text, which is here quite correct ; read rather, "its end," the end of the kingdom.

"Two shall be kept unto the end;" ver. 29, 30.

23. "In his last days." In the last days of the kingdom. "His;" see ver. 18, 20.

"Three kingdoms." This is the reading of the Latin ; all the other versions have, "three kings."

"And renew." All the other Versions have the plural, "they" (the kings) "shall renew."

25. "His wickedness." Compare xi. 44—46, "*his* wickedness;" "*his* last end." Hitherto the eagle has been spoken of by the translators as feminine (ver. 19 ; xi. 2—11.).

26. Some, who think that this book was written in the latter part of the century before the Christian era, would interpret this of the Dictator L. Cornelius Sulla, who, after all his cruelties and proscriptions, died at Cumæ in peace and prosperity, but of a loathsome disease, B.C. 78.

27, 28. Cn. Pompeius (the Great) was assassinated on landing in Egypt, after his defeat by Cæsar at Pharsalia, B.C. 48 ; and Cæsar himself was soon afterwards assassinated in the Senate House, B.C. 44.

29, 30. If the coincidences mentioned in the preceding *Note* should be thought not entirely devoid of probability, the two small wings still surviving (vv. 2, 3.) may possibly be intended to denote some of the leaders in the civil wars which arose after the death of Julius Cæsar ; and we may then suppose that this book was written during these conflicts, when

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the wings passing over the head that is on the right side;

30 it signifieth that these are they, whom the Highest hath kept unto their end : this is the small kingdom and full of trouble, as thou sawest.

31 And the lion, whom thou sawest rising up out of the wood, and roaring, and speaking to the eagle, and rebuking her for her unrighteousness with all the words which thou hast heard ;

² Lat. *wind*,
or, *spirit*.

32 this is the ²anointed, which the Highest hath kept for them and for their wickedness unto the end : he shall reprove them, and shall upbraid them with their cruelty.

33 For he shall set them before him alive in judgment, and shall rebuke them, and correct them.

34 For the rest of my people shall he deliver with

the writer hoped that the long expected Messiah would appear to redress the oppressions on the earth, and to set up the kingdom of righteousness.

29. "Two feathers under the wings." That is, the two smaller wings, "kept unto the end" (ver. 21 ; xi. 24 ; xii. 2.).

"Passing over the head." "Passing over to the head" is the reading of the Syriac and Æthiopic Versions. The Arabic reads, "raising up themselves on the right side of the head." In xi. 24 we have, "remained under the head that was upon the right side."

30. "Unto their end." Compare ver. 21. Rather "unto His end ;" the end which the Highest hath foreseen and appointed.

"The small kingdom and full of trouble." "Small and full of uproar ;" ver. 3.

31. "The lion ;" xi. 37. See Rev. v. 5, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Compare Gen. xlix. 9. Num. xxiii. 24.

32. "The anointed." In the original, the word was, "the Christ" (vii. 28, 29.), the Greek translation of Messiah, or anointed. The Latin text here appears to be mutilated. We find from the other Versions that we ought to read the verse thus : "This is the anointed, whom the Highest hath kept to the end of the days (Dan. xii. 13), who shall arise out of the seed of David, and shall come and speak with them, and reprove them for their wickedness, and upbraid them for their cruelty" (xiii. 37.).

"The anointed" is a judicious emendation of the translators, now found to be confirmed by the Oriental Versions, and the manuscripts of the Latin. The comparatively modern printed text of the Latin reads "wind" (see the *Margin*). "Spirit" is the conjecture of Junius (for whom, see xiii. 2.).

According to the prophecies of Daniel, the God of heaven was to set up His kingdom in the time of the fourth empire (Dan. ii. 44 ; vii. 9—14.).

33. "And shall rebuke them, and correct them ;" xiii. 37, 38. Read, with the Oriental Versions, "And when He shall have rebuked them, then He will destroy them." Compare St. Matt. xxv. 41—46.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XII.

mercy, those that have been preserved upon my borders, and he shall make them joyful until the coming of the day of judgment, whereof I have spoken unto thee from the beginning.

35 This is the dream that thou sawest, and these are the interpretations.

36 Thou only hast been meet to know this secret of the Highest.

37 Therefore write all these things that thou hast seen in a book, and hide them :

38 and teach them to the wise of the people, whose hearts thou knowest may comprehend and keep these secrets.

39 But wait thou here thyself yet seven days more, that it may be shewed thee, whatsoever it pleaseth the Highest to declare unto thee. And with that he went his way.

40 And it came to pass, when all the people saw that the seven days were past, and I not come again into the city, they gathered them all together, from the least unto the greatest, and came unto me, and said,

41 What have we offended thee? and what evil have we done against thee, that thou forsakest us, and sittest here in this place?

34. "My borders." Compare ix. 8; xiii. 48.

"Until the coming of the day of judgment." The more complete translation would be, "until the coming of the end, the day of judgment, of which I have spoken." "The day of judgment." Compare vii. 33, 38*, 47, 66*, 69*, 73*, 84*; viii. 38; xiv. 35.

"Joyful until the coming of the day of judgment." This seems to allude to some notion of a millennium, or reign upon earth, previous to the final judgment. Compare vii. 28; and Rev. xx. 4—6.

36. Compare ver. 9; and viii. 62; x. 38; xiii. 59.

37. "Write all these things . . . in a book, and hide them." Compare xiv. 6, 26, 46. Dan. viii. 26; xii. 4, 9.

38. "Teach them to the wise of the people;" xiv. 46, "Deliver them only to such as be wise among the people." Compare St. Matt. vii. 6; xiii. 11.

39, 51. "Seven days;" v. 13, 20; vi. 31, 35; ix. 27.

40—49. Compare v. 16—19, at the end of the first vision.

40. "All the people . . . from the least unto the greatest." Compare Jonah iii. 5. Jer. vi. 13; xlii. 8; xliv. 12.

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² Or, *people*.

42 For of all the ² prophets thou only art left us, as a cluster of the vintage, and as a candle in a dark place, and as a haven or ship preserved from the tempest.

43 Are not the evils which are come to us sufficient?

44 If thou shalt forsake us, how much better had it been for us, if we also had been burned in the midst of Sion?

45 For we are not better than they that died there. And they wept with a loud voice. Then answered I them, and said,

46 Be of good comfort, O Israel; and be not heavy, thou house of Jacob:

47 for the Highest hath you in remembrance, and the Mighty hath not forgotten you in temptation.

48 As for me, I have not forsaken you, neither am I departed from you: but am come into this place, to pray for the desolation of Sion, and that I might seek mercy for the low estate of your sanctuary.

49 And now go your way home every man, and after these days will I come unto you.

42. "Of all the prophets thou only art left us." The translators here again altered the Latin text by conjecture, as the text which they had before them seemed to give no fitting meaning, "of all the people" (see *Margin*) "thou only art left." "Prophets" is now found to be the reading of the Oriental Versions, and the most ancient manuscript of the Latin. Esdras is called "the prophet," i. 1.

"Of all the prophets . . . as a candle in a dark place." This resembles 2 Pet. i. 19.

"As a haven or ship preserved from the tempest." There is some mistake in the Latin here; we find from the other Versions that the original reading was: "Thou art left us . . . as a haven to a ship preserved, or escaped, from the tempest;" or, "as a haven of safety to a ship in the tempest." The people, after all their sins and calamities, compare themselves to a storm-tossed ship, to which the prophet, with his words of consolation and wisdom, is as a haven of refuge.

44. Compare ver. 48, "the desolation of Sion."

46. "Be of good comfort, O Israel." Compare Is. xl. 1; li. 3; lxvi. 13.

47. "The Highest . . . hath not forgotten you;" Is. xlix. 15.

48. "To pray for the desolation of Sion." Compare Neh. i. 4. "The desolation of Sion;" ver. 44; iii. 2; x. 20—23.

"The low estate of your sanctuary." See x. 21, "Our sanctuary" "is laid waste, our altar broken down." "Your sanctuary:" the reading of the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Armenian Versions, "*our* sanctuary," seems the better one.

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50 So the people went their way into the city, like as I commanded them :

51 but I remained still in the field seven days, as the angel commanded me ; and did eat only in those days of the flowers of the field, and had my meat of the herbs.

CHAPTER XIII.

¹ He seeth in his dream a man coming out of the sea. ²⁵ The declaration of his dream. ⁵⁴ He is praised, and promised to see more.

AND it came to pass after seven days, I dreamed a dream by night :

2 and, lo, there arose ² a wind from the sea, that it moved all the waves thereof.

² a certain man as the wind, Junius.

3 And I beheld, and, lo, that man waxed strong

51. "Did eat only . . . of the flowers of the field;" ix. 24.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Sixth Vision: The Second Dream.

1—13. The Vision of the Man coming up out of the Sea.

1. "Seven days;" v. 13, 20; xii. 39, 51.

"I dreamed a dream;" xi. 1.

2. "There arose a wind." Compare xi. 2. Dan. vii. 2.

"From the sea;" xi. 1.

2. "A certain man as the wind" (*Margin*). This conjectural emendation, which the translators, following the alteration made by Junius, have placed in the *Margin*, shows that they felt that something was omitted. No alteration is to be made here, but the necessary correction is made when the true reading is restored in the next verse.

"Junius" (*Margin*). The reference is to a Latin translation of the Old Testament and Apocrypha, by Emmanuel Tremellius, a converted Jew, born at Ferrara, 1510, and Franciscus Junius (François du Jon), 1545—1602. The first portion, the Law, was published in 1575, and the last, the Apocrypha, in 1579. After the death of Tremellius, his assistant, Junius, published the whole with revisions, at London, 1584. Many editions were subsequently printed, the last being published at Zurich, 1764. As the Second (or Fourth) Book of Esdras is only extant in translations, and the Latin translation was the only one then known, Junius could not translate it; but he put forth, on the basis of the printed Latin text, an "improved" text of his own, and has made in various obscure places, guesses or conjectural alterations, which are sometimes followed by our translators. See, for instance, the marginal renderings at vv. 13, 20; iii. 19; ii. 38; xv. 43; also the *Margin* of Tobit ix. 6; xi. 18; xiv. 10. Judith iii. 9; vii. 3.

3. "And, lo, that man." "That man" comes in so abruptly as to suggest that something has fallen out in the course of transcribing (see the *Margin* of ver. 2, and *Note*). The omission in the Latin is supplied by the other Versions: "And, lo, that wind made to come up out of the heart of the sea as it were the likeness of a man" (see ver. 25.); "and, lo,

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIII.

² clouds.

with the ² thousands of heaven : and when he turned his countenance to look, all the things trembled that were seen under him.

4 And whensoever the voice went out of his mouth, all they burned that heard his voice, like as the earth faileth when it feeleth the fire.

5 And after this I beheld, and, lo, there was gathered together a multitude of men, out of number, from the four winds of the heaven, to subdue the man that came out of the sea.

6 But I beheld, and, lo, he had graved himself a great mountain, and flew up upon it.

7 But I would have seen the region or place where-out the hill was graven, and I could not.

8 And after this I beheld, and, lo, all they which were gathered together to subdue him were sore afraid, and yet durst fight.

9 And, lo, as he saw the violence of the multitude that came, he neither lifted up his hand, nor held sword, nor any instrument of war :

“that man did fly with the clouds of heaven.” “The heart,” or “midst of the sea ;” see ver. 25.

“Waxed strong.” The other Versions have, “did fly.”

“With the thousands of heaven.” The other Versions, and the best manuscripts of the Latin, have “clouds.” See also the *Margin*. Compare Dan. vii. 13. St. Matt. xxiv. 30. Rev. i. 7.

“When he turned his countenance to look, all the things trembled,” &c. Compare Rev. xx. 11, “From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.”

4. “All they burned that heard his voice, like as the earth faileth.” The other Versions have, “all they melted that heard his voice, like as the wax melteth when it feeleth the fire.” “Like as the wax melteth.” Compare Micah i. 4. Ps. xvii. 5, and Ps. lxxviii. 2. Compare also the Book of Enoch the Prophet (see on 2 Esdr. ii. 19.), translated from the Æthiopic by Archbishop Lawrence: “The lofty mountains shall be troubled, and the exalted hills depressed, melting like a honeycomb in the flame” (i. 6. See also li. 5.).

5. “A multitude.” See vv. 34 (*Note*), 49.

“From the four winds.” Compare Dan. vii. 2. St. Matt. xxiv. 31. St. Mark xiii. 27. See also Rev. xx. 8, 9, where St. John tells of the nations from the four quarters of the earth, gathered together to battle, and compassing the beloved city, and devoured by fire which came down from God out of heaven.

6. “A great mountain.” See vv. 35, 36.

9—11. Compare Is. xi. 4, “He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked ;” and 2 Thess. ii. 8. Rev. xix. 15 ; xx. 9.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIII.

10 but only I saw that he sent out of his mouth as it had been a blast of fire, and out of his lips a flaming breath, and out of his tongue he cast out sparks and tempests.

11 And they were all mixed together; the blast of fire, the flaming breath, and the great tempest; and fell with violence upon the multitude which was prepared to fight, and burned them up every one, so that upon a sudden of an innumerable multitude nothing was to be perceived, but only dust and smell of smoke: when I saw this I was afraid.

12 Afterward saw I the same man come down from the mountain, and call unto him another peaceable multitude.

13 And there came much people unto him, whereof some were glad, some were sorry, some of them were bound, and other some brought ² of them that were offered: then was I sick through great fear, and I awaked, and said,

² Junius, of the things that were offered.

14 Thou hast shewed thy servant these wonders from the beginning, and hast counted me worthy that thou shouldest receive my prayer:

11. "Dust." Add, with the best manuscripts of the Latin, and with the other Versions, "of ashes."

12. "Another peaceable multitude." It would have been better to have rendered, "Another multitude, peaceable." "Another," as distinct from the first multitude (vv. 5, 34); "peaceable," in contrast to the hostile purpose of that first multitude, which was gathered together to fight against the man. "A multitude;" compare 2 Esdr. ii. 42.

13. "And other some brought of them that were offered." It is not clear what is the meaning of the Latin, when it says that others were bringing or leading those who were offered or presented unto him. The Æthiopic Version omits the clause. The Syriac Version reads, "those things which were offered." Compare the conjecture of Junius (see on ver. 2.), placed in the *Margin*, intending, it may be supposed, oblations, or sacrifices, or gifts, in token of homage. The Arabic translator seems to have made a different guess at the meaning, by paraphrasing to this effect: "and other some brought those unto him who were in various conditions," or "whose works were various;" that is, some in this state, some in that, of happiness or sadness, virtue or wickedness.

"Then was I sick." The other Versions, and the best manuscripts of the Latin, omit this, and read, "Then I through great fear awaked, and said." Compare xii. 3.

14. "Hast counted me worthy that thou shouldest receive my prayer." Compare St. John ix. 31, and such passages as those cited

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIII.

15 shew me now yet the interpretation of this dream.

16 For as I conceive in mine understanding, woe unto them that shall be left in those days! and much more woe unto them that are not left behind!

17 For they that were not left were in heaviness.

18 Now understand I the things that are laid up in the latter days, which shall happen unto them, and to those that are left behind.

19 Therefore are they come into great perils and many necessities, like as these dreams declare.

20 Yet is it easier for him that is in danger to come into ²these things, than to pass away as a

² Or,
this day.

in the *Margin* there, "We know that God beareth not sinners: but "if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He "heareth."

16. "Them that shall be left in those days! . . . left behind!" vv. 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 48; v. 28. Compare St. Paul, 1 Thess. iv. 15, "which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord."

17. "That were not left." Rather, "that are not" (that is, who shall not be) "left."

18, 19. Notwithstanding differences of reading in the Latin manuscripts, and variations in the other Versions, we can see that the original of the passage was something to this effect. Connecting ver. 18 with vv. 16, 17, we may read, "Woe to them which shall be left in those days, but much "more woe to them who are not left alive. For they who shall not be "left to survive unto those days are in heaviness, as understanding those "things which are laid up in the latter days, unto which they shall not "attain (compare ver. 20.). And to those who are left alive, even "unto them woe, for they shall behold great perils, and many necessities, "like as these dreams declare."

20. "Easier." Perhaps an error in the Latin, which by a slight alteration may be made to read, "happier." The Syriac and Æthiopic have "better."

"For him that is in danger to come into these things." The meaning would have been clearer if the words had been rendered, "It "is better to run the risk, and to come into these things, than to pass "away as a cloud out of the world," &c. It is better to go through the trial than to miss it, and thus lose the lessons and the discipline it had to teach. In something of the same spirit it has been said, "'Tis better "to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all." It was worth while, notwithstanding the dangers and troubles of that time, to live to see the great things which were to come to pass in the latter days. See ver. 24.

"These things." "This day" (*Margin*); a conjecture adopted from Junius (see ver. 2.). "These things" is the reading of all the Versions, except the Armenian, which reads, "that time."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIII.

cloud out of the world, and not to see the things that happen in the last days.

And he answered unto me, and said,

21 The interpretation of the vision shall I shew thee, and I will open unto thee the thing that thou hast required.

22 Whereas thou hast spoken of them that are left behind, this is the interpretation:

23 he that shall endure the peril in that time hath kept himself: they that be fallen into danger are such as have works, and faith toward the Almighty.

24 Know this therefore, that they which be left behind are more blessed than they that be dead.

25 This is the meaning of the vision: Whereas thou sawest a man coming up from the midst of the sea:

21—53. The Interpretation of the Vision.

22. "Of them that are left behind." Add, with the Syriac and Arabic Versions, "and of them that are not left behind" (see vv. 16 and 24). "Left behind;" compare vv. 16, 17, 18, 24, 26, those who are living in the last times.

23. As the verse stands here, its meaning is, that those who have to endure the peril of that time, are those who are prepared for it by their previous life of self-control, holiness, and trust in God.

"Hath kept himself." Compare 1 John v. 8. The true reading, however, as obtained by comparing the most ancient manuscript of the Latin with the Syriac and Æthiopic Versions, brings out the pious and consoling reflection, that the God who shall bring upon His faithful servants the peril, shall preserve them in the dangers which they are called upon in His providence to face. "He who shall bring the danger in that time, He Himself shall keep them who have fallen into the danger, even such as have works and faith towards the Almighty."

"He that shall endure the peril." In "endure" the translators follow a guess of Junius (see ver. 2.), the printed Latin text having "takth away." The most ancient Latin manuscript has the reading adopted in the *Note*, "He who shall bring."

24 "They which be left behind are more blessed than they that be dead." See v. 41, 42; "left behind," vv. 16, 22.

25. "The midst of the sea;" vv. 2, 51. Literally, the "heart of the sea." Exod. xv. 8. Compare Jonah ii. 3. Ps. xlv. 2. Ezek. xxvii. 4; and above, iv. 7. In a like way of speaking, we have, "heart of the earth" (St. Matt. xii. 40.); "heart of heaven" (Deut. iv. 11.); "heart of the oak" (2 Sam. xviii. 14.).

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26 the same is he whom God the Highest hath kept a great season, which by his own self shall deliver his creature: and he shall order them that are left behind.

27 And whereas thou sawest, that out of his mouth there came as a blast of wind, and fire, and storm;

28 and that he held neither sword, nor any instrument of war, but that the rushing in of him destroyed the whole multitude that came to subdue him; this is the interpretation:

29 behold, the days come, when the most High will begin to deliver them that are upon the earth.

30 And he shall come to the astonishment of them that dwell on the earth.

31 And one shall undertake to fight against another, one city against another, one place against another, ^aone people against another, and one realm against another.

32 And the time shall be when these things shall come to pass, and the signs shall happen which I shewed thee before, and then shall my Son be declared, whom thou sawest as a man ascending.

26. "Shall deliver his creature." Compare Rom. viii. 21. Acts iii. 21.

27. See ver. 10.

28. See ver. 9.

30. "He shall come to the astonishment." The Syriac and Arabic Versions read, "there shall come astonishment;" that is, according to those Versions, horror and dread. Compare "astonishment of heart," Deut. xxviii. 28. The Æthiopic omits the clause.

31. "One against another." Compare Zech. xiv. 13.

"One city against another." Compare 2 Chr. xv. 6. Is. xix. 2.

"One people against another." Compare St. Matt. xxiv. 7. St. Mark xiii. 8. St. Luke xxi. 10.

32. "The signs which I shewed thee before." See v. 4—9; v. 12, 18—28; and compare vii. 26.

"Then shall my Son be declared." Compare vii. 28, "my Son Christ shall be revealed." "My Son;" vv. 37, 52; vii. 28, 29; ^{iv}v. 9. See also xii. 32.

"My Son." Compare the Book of Enoch (see on ii. 19., cv. (civ., Lawrence) 2: "In those days, saith the Lord . . . I and *my Son* will for ever hold communion with them in the paths of uprightness. . . . Rejoice, children of integrity, in the truth." Some readers may perhaps feel an interest in having before them the following passage,

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33 And when all the people hear his voice, every man shall in their own land leave the battle they have one against another.

34 And an innumerable multitude shall be ga-

as an illustration of the teaching of the Book of Enoch concerning the Messiah: "In that place I beheld a fountain of righteousness which "never failed, encircled by many springs of wisdom. Of these the thirsty "drank (compare Rev. xxi. 6.), and were filled with wisdom, having "their habitation with the righteous, the elect, and the holy. In that "hour was this Son of man invoked before the Lord of Spirits, and His "name in the presence of the Ancient of Days. Before the sun and the "signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed, His name "was invoked in the presence of the Lord of Spirits. A support shall "He be for the righteous and the holy to lean upon without falling, "and He shall be the light of nations (compare Is. xlix. 6.). He "shall be the hope of those whose hearts are troubled. All who dwell "on earth shall fall down and worship before Him, shall bless and glorify "Him, and sing praises to the name of the Lord of Spirits (compare "Dan. vii. 13, 14.). Therefore the Elect and the Concealed One existed "in His presence before the world was created and for ever. In His "presence He existed, and has revealed to the righteous the wisdom of "the Lord of Spirits; for He has preserved the lot of the righteous, "because they have hated and rejected this world of iniquity, and have "detested all its works and ways, in the name of the Lord of Spirits. "For in His name shall they be preserved; and His will shall be their "life. In those days shall the kings of the earth, and the mighty men "who have gained the world by their achievements (by the work of their "own hands), become humble in countenance (compare Rev. vi. 15.). "For in the day of their anxiety and trouble, their souls shall not be "saved, and they shall be in subjection to those whom I have chosen " (compare Dan. vii. 22. Wisd. iii. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 2. Rev. ii. 26, 27.). "I will cast them like hay into the fire, and like lead into the water " (compare Exod. xv. 10. Mal. iv. 1. St. Matt. iii. 12.). Thus shall "they burn in the presence of the righteous, and sink in the presence of "the holy. . . . In His presence shall they fall and not be raised up "again; nor shall there be any one to take them out of His hands and "to lift them up, for they have denied the Lord of Spirits and His "Messiah" (chap. xlviii., Archbishop Lawrence's Translation.).

This book in other places also speaks of the "Son of man" (e.g. xlv. 2—4; lxi. 10, 17); of "the Son of woman sitting upon the throne of His "glory" (lxi. 9. Compare St. Matt. xxv. 31.); of "the Messiah" (li. 4.); and the "Elect One" (e.g. l. 3, 5; li. 10; lx. 10; lxi. 1.). If this book be a Jewish book, written in the century before Christ, these passages are very remarkable, as throwing light on the doctrine of the Jews concerning the Messiah. It is not, however, safe to found an argument upon them in our present uncertainty whether the Book of Enoch, even if it is to be assigned to the early date which some claim for it, may not contain some later portions inserted by some one acquainted with Christianity.

34. See ver. 5; and compare Joel iii. 9. Zech. xiv. 2, 3. Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix., with Rev. xx. 8. Rev. xix. 19, "And I saw the beast, and the

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thered together, as thou sawest them, willing to come, and to overcome him by fighting.

35 But he shall stand upon the top of the mount Sion.

36 And Sion shall come, and shall be shewed to all men, being prepared and builded, like as thou sawest the hill graven without hands.

37 And this my Son shall rebuke the wicked inventions of those nations, which for their wicked life are fallen into the tempest;

38 and shall lay before them their evil thoughts, and the torments wherewith they shall begin to be tormented, which are like unto a flame: and he shall destroy them without labour by the law which is like unto fire.

39 And whereas thou sawest that he gathered another peaceable multitude unto him;

40 those are the ten tribes, which were carried

"kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army."

35. "Stand upon the top of the mount Sion." The writer may have had in remembrance Mic. iv. 7. Compare Rev. xiv. 1, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion." See also *Note* on 2 Esdr. ii. 42.

36. "And Sion shall come, and shall be shewed to all men." Compare viii. 52, "for unto you a city is builded;" and vii. 26, "And the bride shall appear," &c., where other Versions have "city."

"Prepared and builded." Compare Rev. xxi. 2.

"The hill graven without hands." Compare Dan. ii. 34, 45.

37. See xii. 32, 33. The text of this verse and the next is somewhat uncertain; the first clause should be, "This my Son shall rebuke for their wicked inventions those nations which have come" (together to fight against him).

"Tempest;" ver. 10.

38. "Shall lay before them their evil thoughts." That is, shall lay them before them in stern reproof and unanswerable accusation.

"Like unto a flame." The Syriac Version takes these words as spoken of the Son, "He, who is like unto a flame, shall destroy them."

"Destroy them without labour." See vv. 9—11. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 8, "whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming."

"Like unto fire;" ver. 10. Compare Deut. iv. 24, "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire." Is. lxvi. 15. 2 Thess. i. 8. Heb. x. 27; xii. 29.

39. "Another peaceable multitude;" See on ver. 12.

40. "Ten tribes." The Syriac and Arabic Versions have, "the nine tribes and a half;" the Æthiopic, "nine tribes." As three tribes,—Judah,

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIII.

away prisoners out of their own land in the time of Ōsea the king, whom ^bSalmanasar the king of ^b2 Kin. 17. 3. Assyria led away captive, and he carried them over the waters, and so came they into another land.

Benjamin, and Levi,—belonged to the kingdom of Judah, “ten” tribes (1 Kin. xi. 31.) could be formed by reckoning the divisions of the tribe of Joseph,—Manasseh and Ephraim,—as two, or perhaps as three, distinct tribes, as the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan is reckoned by itself, with Reuben and Gad (1 Chr. v. 23; vii. 14, 20.).

“Over the waters.” The Latin text has simply, “over the river,” the Euphrates. Compare the translation, “on the other side of the flood,” Josh. xxiv. 2, 3, 14, 15. Those of the exiles who were placed “in the cities of the Medes,” were carried over the Tigris also (2 Kin. xvii. 6; xviii. 11.).

40—47. This strange legend of the “ten tribes,” dwelling in the land of “Arsareth,” a journey of a year and a half beyond Euphrates, arose out of the belief among the Jews that the ten tribes still continued to exist in the East, preserving their nationality as a separate people. Josephus consoles the vanity of his countrymen by saying, “there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the “ten tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers” (*Antiq.* XI. v. 2.). Even now it can hardly be said that the notion that the “ten tribes” may be found somewhere has quite ceased to exist. The inhabitants, however, of the northern kingdom, on being carried away into Assyria on the capture of Samaria (2 Kin. xvii. 6; xviii. 11.), disappear from our view. Already half heathenized, they became mingled among the heathen. Having lost their priesthood and their religion, corrupted by schism and idolatry, wasted by invasion and internal dissensions, they had no effectual bond of national unity to preserve them against the many disintegrating influences to which they would become subject in foreign lands after their deportation; they were rapidly absorbed in the general population of the places where they dwelt, and as a separate nation have left no trace behind. Religious families, like those of Tobit, would form part of the Jews of the “Dispersion” (St. John vii. 35. James i. 1.), who looked to Jerusalem as their national and religious centre (Acts ii. 9—11.). The Jews who returned to Judæa with Zerubbabel, and afterwards with Ezra, returned as the representatives of the whole people (see Ezra ii. 70, *Note*; vi. 17; viii. 85.).

The writer has before spoken of the ten tribes as already carried across the river (ver. 40.), when taken away into Assyria (2 Kin. xvii. 6.); this legend, however, with its attendant marvel of the miraculous crossing and re-crossing the Euphrates, would seem to make them start from this side (the western side) of the river. The relaters of the legendary story, in their desire to embellish it with the miracles of crossing and re-crossing the river, did not trouble themselves about any inconsistencies with the historical account; and, as a great multitude of people are described as going a journey for a year and a half to an unknown land, where they remain for ages hidden from the rest of the world, it was needful that they should be sent off into the recesses

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIII.

41 But they took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a further country, where never mankind dwelt,

42 that they might there keep their statutes, which they never kept in their own land.

43 And they entered into Euphrates by the narrow passages of the river.

^c Ex. 14. 21. 44 For the most High then shewed ^c signs for them, and held still the flood, till they were passed over.
Josh. 3. 15, 16.

45 For through that country there was a great way to go, namely, of a year and a half: and the same region is called ² Arsareth.
² Or, *Ararath*.

46 Then dwelt they there until the latter time; and now when they shall begin to come,

47 the Highest shall stay the springs of the stream again, that they may go through: therefore sawest thou the multitude with peace.

48 But those that be left behind of thy people are they that are found within my borders.

of Asia, or somewhere where imagination might run least risk of being confronted with realities.

The ten tribes are here represented as leaving Assyria, and led by great signs into the far off land, where they are preserved until they are miraculously brought back to Sion. With this, contrast 2 Esdr. ii. 8, where the presence of the wicked Jews in Assyria is supposed to bring down a judgment on the land in which they dwelt.

We have here a repetition of the miracles of the holding back of the waters of Jordan, and of the Red Sea.

45. "Through that country." The Syriac and Arabic have, "unto that country."

"*Arsareth*." This name may be merely a corruption of the Hebrew words, "the strange land" ("another land," Deut. xxix. 28. Compare ver. 40.), taken as a proper name; the two Hebrew words pronounced somewhat rapidly would be very similar in sound to *Arzareth*. The Syriac Version has, "the same region is called *Arzaph*, the end of "the world." The *Æthiopic* gives the name as "*Azaph*;" the Arabic has two names, "*Acsarari*" and "*Ararawin*." The Armenian Version omits the whole story of the preservation and return of the ten tribes. In this Version passages are often omitted which seemed to the translator difficult to be understood, or foolish and mythical; such, for instance, as vi. 6—10, Jacob and Esau; vi. 49—52, Behemoth and Leviathan; vii. 29—31, the rejoicing for four hundred years, and the death of Messias.

48. The Syriac Version reads, "But those also who are left behind

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIII.

49 Now when he destroyeth the multitude of the nations that are gathered together, he shall defend his people that remain.

50 And then shall he shew them great wonders.

51 Then said I, O Lord that bearest rule, shew me this: Wherefore have I seen the man coming up from the midst of the sea?

52 And he said unto me, Like as thou canst neither seek out nor know the things that are in the deep of the sea: even so can no man upon earth see my Son, or those that be with him, but in the day time.

53 This is the interpretation of the dream which thou sawest, and whereby thou only art here lightened.

54 For thou hast forsaken thine own way, and applied thy diligence unto my law, and sought it.

55 Thy life hast thou ordered in wisdom, and hast called understanding thy mother.

56 And therefore have I shewed thee the trea-

“of thy people shall be saved, those who are found within my holy borders.”

“My borders;” See ix. 8; xii. 34.

49. “The multitude of the nations that are gathered together;” vv. 5, 34.

51. “O Lord that bearest rule;” iii. 4.

“The midst of the sea;” ver. 25; and ver. 30 in the restored reading.

52. “Thou.” Instead of “thou,” the oldest manuscripts of the Latin and the other Versions read, “Like as no man can seek out nor know,” &c.

“My Son;” vv. 32, 37; xiv. 9.

“Those that be with him.” Compare xiv. 9.

“But” (i.e. except) “in the day time.” This seems without meaning, but the other Versions enable us to correct the mistake of the Latin, and to replace the true reading, “except in the time of His day.” “His day:” compare St. Luke xvii. 22—24, “so shall the Son of man be in His day.”

53. Compare xii. 9, 36, “Thou only hast been meet to know the secret of the Highest.” Compare vi. 33.

54, 55. Compare also for the praises of Esdras, vi. 32; vii. 77*.

54. “Thou hast forsaken thine own way.” Compare iii. 8; xiv. 34.

55. “Thou hast called understanding thy mother.” Compare Prov. vii. 4, “Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman.” A like form of expression, though differently applied, is found in Job xvii. 14.

56. Compare ver. 53; and x. 56, 57, 59.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

tures of the Highest: after other three days I will speak other things unto thee, and declare unto thee mighty and wondrous things.

57 Then went I forth into the field, giving praise and thanks greatly unto the most High because of his wonders, which he did in time;

58 and because he governeth the same, and such things as fall in their seasons: and there I sat three days.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 A voice out of a bush calleth Esdras, 10 and telleth him that the world waxeth old. 22 He desireth, because the law was burnt, to write all again, 24 and is bid to get swift writers. 39 He and they are filled with understanding: 45 but he is charged not to publish all that is written.

AND it came to pass upon the third day, I sat under an oak, and, behold, there came a voice out of a bush over against me, and said, Esdras, Esdras.

2 And I said, Here am I, Lord. And I stood up upon my feet.

^a Ex. 3, 2, &c.

3 Then said he unto me, ^a In the bush I did manifestly reveal myself unto Moses, and talked with him, when my people served in Egypt:

4 and I sent him, and led my people out of Egypt, and brought him up to the mount of Sinai, where I held him by me a long season,

5 and told him many wondrous things, and shewed him the secrets of the times, and the end; and commanded him, saying,

58. "Because he governeth the same." Read rather, "because he governeth the seasons." Compare, "the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power," Acts i. 7.

CHAPTER XIV.

1—48. The Rewriting of the Law.

1. "I sat under an oak." Judg. vi. 11. 1 Kin. xiii. 14, though there is some uncertainty as to the tree denoted by the word rendered "oak." Compare also 1 Kin. xix. 4.

1—3. "There came a voice out of a bush," &c. Imitated from Exod. iii. 2—4.

2. "I stood up upon my feet;" vi. 17. Compare v. 15; vi. 13.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

6 These words shalt thou declare, and these shalt thou hide.

7 And now I say unto thee,

8 that thou lay up in thy heart the signs that I have shewed, and the dreams that thou hast seen, and the interpretations which thou hast heard:

9 for thou shalt be taken away from all, and from henceforth thou shalt remain with my ² Son, ² Or, *counsel*. and with such as be like thee, until the times be ended.

5, 6. "These words shalt thou declare." Compare ver. 45.

"These shalt thou hide." Compare ver. 46; xii. 37; and see ver. 26. These verses may serve to illustrate the opinions concerning traditions among the Jews (compare St. Matt. xv. 2—9. St. Mark vii. 3—13.). It was supposed that God delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai not only the written law, but also the authoritative oral interpretation. This was handed down through the elders, through Joshua and Ezra and Gamaliel (Acts v. 34; xxii. 3.), to Rabbi Judah the Holy, President of the Sanhedrin at Tiberias, who, about the middle of the second century after Christ, reduced these traditions to writing. This collection is known as the "Mishnah" (repetition), on which commentaries, called "Gemara" (completion), were written; and these together make up the "Talmud" (learning). A sufficient account of this subject may be found in Prideaux, *Connection*, i. 5, under the year 446 B.C.

9. For thou shalt be taken away." See viii. 19; and ver. 49, one of the verses omitted at the end of the chapter.

"From all." The other Versions intimate that we should rather read, "thou shalt be taken away from men;" and St. Ambrose, who quotes this passage (*De Bono Mortis*, xi.), seems so to have read it.

"From henceforth thou shalt remain with my Son." Esdras was, like Enoch and Elijah (compare vi. 26.), to be taken away and remain with the Messiah (xii. 32.), till the day when the Son should be revealed (vii. 28; xiii. 32.), and "the times be ended."

"My Son;" vii. 28, 29; xiii. 32, 37, 52. This is the true reading. "With my counsel" (*Margin*) is the reading of the printed Latin text (see also x. 16, *Note*); but "Son" is a judicious emendation of the translators, who perhaps took it from the quotation by St. Ambrose. "With my Son," the reading of the manuscripts of the Latin, is also the reading of the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic Versions; the Armenian has, "with me."

"And with such as be like thee." Compare iv. 36, where we should read (see *Note*), "when the number of those like thee is fulfilled." See also ver. 49, one of the verses omitted in the printed text at the end of this chapter, and viii. 51. See also vii. 28; xiii. 52. This passage, with others (compare vii. 28; xii. 32; xiii. 32, 37.), shows that the writer thought that the Messiah, the Son of God, existed before He was manifested to the world.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

10 For the world hath lost his youth, and the times begin to wax old.

11 For the world is divided into twelve parts, and the ten parts of it are gone already, and half of a tenth part:

12 and there remaineth that which is after the half of the tenth part.

13 Now therefore set thine house in order, and reprove thy people, comfort such of them as be in trouble; and now renounce corruption,

14 let go from thee mortal thoughts, cast away the burdens of man, put off now the weak nature,

15 and set aside the thoughts that are most heavy unto thee, and haste thee to flee from these times.

¹ Matt. 24. 8. 16 For ^by et greater evils than those which thou hast seen happen shall be done hereafter.

17 For look how much the world shall be weaker through age, so much the more shall evils increase upon them that dwell therein.

18 For the truth is fled far away, and leasing

10. "The world hath lost his youth," &c. Compare ver. 17, "The world shall be weaker through age." See on v. 50—55. "*His youth*;" see on iv. 19, 21.

11. "The world is divided into twelve parts," &c. The *Æthiopic Version* reads, "the world is distributed into ten periods; to the tenth it is arrived, and a half of that tenth remains." There seems to have been some uncertainty as to the original text, as the *Syriac* and *Armenian Versions* omit altogether vv. 11 and 12, and the *Arabic* merely paraphrases in general terms, "the greater part of its years hath passed away, and those that remain are very few." Compare xvi. 37—39, 52. The *Book of Enoch* (chap. 92.), speaks of the ten weeks of the world's duration; on the seventh day of the tenth week there was to be the everlasting judgment.

Compare iv. 45—50, where, under the figures of the storm of rain that is almost over, and the furnace that is all but burned out, it is shown that there remaineth but a little space for the world to last.

13. "Comfort such of them as be in trouble." The other Versions show us that after these words a clause has been omitted, "teach those that be wise." Compare ver. 46.

"Renounce corruption." That is, bid farewell to this earthly life, frail and corruptible. The other versions have, "this life of corruption," or words to the same effect.

17. See ver. 10; and compare St. Cyprian, quoted in the *Note* on v. 50—55.

18. "Truth is fled far away." Compare v. 1, 2, "Truth shall be

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

is hard at hand: for now hasteth the vision to come, which thou hast seen.

19 Then answered I before thee, and said,

20 Behold, Lord, I will go, as thou hast commanded me, and reprove the people which are present: but they that shall be born afterward, who shall admonish them? thus the world is set in darkness, and they that dwell therein are without light.

21 For thy law is burnt, therefore no man know-

"hidden, and the land shall be barren of faith," &c. Our Lord speaks of the abounding of iniquity in the last days, and of false prophets deceiving many (St. Matt. xxiv. 11, 12.).

"Leasing is hard at hand." "Leasing" (lying, falsehood), though obsolete now, occurs in this sense, Ps. iv. 2; v. 6; and in Shakspeare and older writers.

"Hard at hand;" Eccclus. li. 26. "Hard" is often used in the English Version in the sense of close, near,—“Whose house joined hard to the synagogue;” Acts xviii. 7. Judg. xx. 45. 1 Sam. xiv. 22; xxxi. 2. 1 Kin. xxi. 1, &c. Milton, *Par. Lost*, i. 417, “Lust, hard by hate.”

"The vision." The other Versions intimate that the reading probably was, “the eagle;” or, “the times of the eagle which thou sawest in thy vision” (xi., xii.).

"Hasteth to come." This seems to mean, the time when the eagle is to be destroyed by the lion (xi. 45, 46; xii. 31, 32.).

20. "In darkness . . . without light." Darkness, the constant emblem of ignorance and sin (Is. ix. 2; l. 10. Jer. xiii. 16. Rom. xiii. 12. Eph. v. 8. 1 Thess. v. 4, 5. 1 John ii. 8, &c.).

21. "Thy law is burnt." It was a general opinion among the early Christian Fathers, that Ezra restored the books of the Old Testament, the copies of which had been lost or destroyed in the troubles attending the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. See, for instance, Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.* iii. 25; the Greek is in Eusebius, *II. E.* v. 8.), Tertullian (*De Cult. Fæm.* i. 3.), Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* i. 22.), St. Chrysostom (*Hom. VIII. in Heb.*), St. Jerome (*Adv. Helvid.* chap. vii.), St. Basil (*Epistle to Chilo* xlii, §. 5.). Some of them, it may be, express themselves somewhat incautiously, so as to leave themselves open to the insinuation that, following the relation in this chapter, or some similar tradition, they had come to believe that Ezra, inspired by the same spirit which at the first composed these books, rewrote them again (compare ver. 40.) after they had perished. But such an opinion as this (as Prideaux, *Connection*, i. 5, justly observes) is open to the obvious objection, “that he who should be said thus to have revived, then forged the whole.” Perfect copies of the books of the Law would always be few, and would naturally become still more scarce in times of neglect or trouble (compare 2 Kin. xxii. 8, 13. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 14. See Deut. xvii. 18): and we may well believe that Ezra and those with him, who were so diligent in reading the Law to the people (Neh. viii.), and in enforcing

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

eth the things that are done of thee, or the works that shall begin.

22 But if I have found grace before thee, send the Holy Ghost into me, and I shall write all that hath been done in the world since the beginning, which were written in thy law, that men may find thy path, and that they which will live in the latter days may live.

23 And he answered me, saying, Go thy way, gather the people together, and say unto them, that they seek thee not for forty days.

² Or,
box tables
to write on
See ver. 44.

24 But look thou prepare thee many ² box trees,

its observance, took care for the reproduction of a sufficient number of copies of the Law, which they had now learned so highly to value. It has been thought, and there is nothing improbable in such an opinion, that Ezra collected together and arranged, and, so to speak, carefully "edited," from the best and most accurate copies, the books of the Old Testament; adding, it may be, here and there some few notes or words of explanation, which now appear as parts of the text. Perhaps some of those early Christian writers referred to did not really mean to say much more than this.

"The things that are done of thee, or the works that shall begin." That is, those things that thou hast done, and those things that thou art about to do. History and prophecy alike had perished.

22. "If I have found grace before thee." See iv. 44; v. 56, and the places there referred to.

"Send the Holy Ghost into me, and I shall write." Compare 2 Pet. i. 21.

"Thy path." Compare such passages as Ps. xvii. 5; xviii. 21; xxiii. 3; xxv. 4, 9, 10; xxvii. 11; xxxvii. 34; lxxxvi. 11; cxix. 33, 37. Is. ii. 3, &c.

"That they which will live in the latter days may live." "Will live;" that is, wish to live, desire to live; live with the true life of righteousness as opposed to the death in sin (compare St. John v. 25. St. Luke xv. 24, 32. Eph. ii. 1. 1 Pet. iii. 10, &c.); the life which is the beginning here of the eternal life of holiness and happiness in the world to come.

23. "Forty days;" vv. 36, 44, 45. Exod. xxiv. 18.

24. "Box trees." This is rightly explained in the *Margin*, "box tables to write on;" the other Versions have simply "tablets." These tablets were so frequently made of box, that a word formed from the name of the box tree became a general name for a writing-tablet, and is thus used in the Greek translation (LXX.) of the Old Testament, even when these "tables" were of stone (Exod. xxiv. 12. Compare also Is. xxx. 8. Hab. ii. 2.). These tablets—as we find, for instance, from the little poem, written as an advertisement by the Roman poet who had lost his old and worn, but loved and familiar writing-tablets of boxwood (*Propertius*, III. xxiii. 8.)—were coated with wax, which was written upon by a sharp iron instrument called a "stylus," which sometimes cut

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

and take with thee Sarea, Dabria, Selemia, ²Ecanus, ²Or, *Banus*, and Asiel, these five which are ready to write swiftly;

25 and come hither, and I shall light a candle of understanding in thine heart, which shall not be put out, till the things be performed which thou shalt begin to write.

26 And when thou hast done, some things shalt thou publish, and some things shalt thou shew secretly to the wise: to morrow this hour shalt thou begin to write.

27 Then went I forth, as he commanded, and gathered all the people together, and said,

28 Hear these words, O Israel.

29 ^cOur fathers at the beginning were strangers ^cGen. 47. 4. in Egypt, from whence they were delivered:

30 ^dand received the law of life, which they kept ^dActs 7. 53. not, which ye also have transgressed after them.

31 Then was the land, even the land of Sion, parted among you by lot: but your fathers, and

through the wax into the wood. These tablets were made of other woods,—fir, beech, citron wood, or of ivory. The “writing table” mentioned in St. Luke i. 63, was, no doubt, such a tablet of wood covered with wax. These tablets would be very inconvenient for writing out a work of any length, such as the Law. The Jewish Scriptures on the synagogue rolls are written on skins, like the copy of the Law written on skins, which, according to Josephus (*Antiq.* XII. ii. 11.), was sent from Jerusalem to Egypt in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in order that it might be translated into Greek. The words of Jeremiah were written with “ink” on a roll, probably of parchment or skin (Jer. xxxvi. 2, 4, 18.); the “leaves” spoken of in ver. 23, were the columns in which the writing was arranged on the rolls (compare also Is. viii. 1. Ezek. ii. 9.). The prophecies in xv., xvi. (see xv. 2.), were written on paper.

25. “Candle of understanding in thine heart.” Compare Prov. xx. 27. St. Matt. vi. 22.

26. “Some things shalt thou publish, and some things shalt thou shew secretly to the wise.” See on ver. 6, and vv. 45, 46.

“Secretly to the wise.” Compare ver. 46, and viii. 62, “unto thee, and a few like thee.”

29, 30. “Our fathers . . . kept not . . . ye also transgressed.” Compare Ezra ix. 7. Neh. ix. 16. Ps. cvi. 6.

30. “The law of life.” Lev. xviii. 5. Neh. ix. 29. Ezek. xx. 11, 13, 21. St. Luke x. 28.

“Which they kept not.” See ix. 32. Compare Acts vii. 53.

31. “Then was the land . . . of Sion, parted among you by lot.”

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

ye yourselves, have done unrighteousness, and have not kept the ways which the Highest commanded you.

32 And forasmuch as he is a righteous judge, he took from you in time the thing that he had given you.

33 And now are ye here, and your brethren among you.

34 Therefore if so be that ye will subdue your own understanding, and reform your hearts, ye shall be kept alive, and after death ye shall obtain mercy.

35 For after death shall the judgment come, when we shall live again: and then shall the names of the righteous be manifest, and the works of the ungodly shall be declared.

"The land of Sion;" the expression is an unusual one, but we may account for it by remembering that all else in Palestine, in the later times when a great part of the land was half heathenized, would be felt by a religious Jew to be but subordinate to the Holy City. The land was divided by lot (Num. xxvi. 55; xxxiii. 54. Josh. xiv. 2.), long before Zion fell into the hands of the children of Israel in the time of David (2 Sam. v. 7.). "Land of Sion," and not land of Sihon (Deut. iv. 46.), seems to be the true reading.

32. "Forasmuch as he is a righteous judge." Compare Neh. ix. 33. Dan. ix. 14.

34. "If so be that ye will subdue your own understanding." Compare iii. 8; xiii. 54. Prov. iii. 5, 6. Self-will and self-pleasing are the great occasions of sin (Ecclus. v. 2, 3.).

"Shall be kept alive." There may be a reference here to the intermediate state between death and judgment, spoken of in vii. 78*, 91*—98*.

"After death ye shall obtain mercy." See vii. 36*, 38*, 88*—98*.

35. "After death shall the judgment come." Compare Heb. ix. 27. "The judgment," vii. 38*, 87*; xii. 34.

"When we shall live again." The life after death is also spoken of, vii. 32, 36*, 78*—101*, 117 (47.), 126 (56.); ix. 12. See also 2 Macc. vii. 9, 14, 23, 36. Many of the Jews in later times believed in the future life. See Acts xxiii. 8; xxiv. 15. Josephus, *Antiq.* XVIII. i. 3, 4.

"Then shall the names of the righteous be manifest." Compare Rev. iii. 5, "I will confess His name before my Father, and before His angels."

"The works of the ungodly shall be declared." Compare 1 Cor. iv. 5. Rev. xx. 12. Rom. ii. 16. Eccles. xii. 14.

As the Jewish polity was now destroyed, the writer, though Esdras is supposed to be speaking to the Jews in Babylon (iii. 1; v. 17.), does not put forward any hopes of temporal restoration, but looks forward, as a Christian might, to the life to come.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

36 Let no man therefore come unto me now, nor seek after me these forty days.

37 So I took the five men, as he commanded me, and we went into the field, and remained there.

38 And the next day, behold, a voice called me, saying, Esdras, °open thy mouth, and drink that ° Ezek. 3. 1. I give thee to drink.

39 Then opened I my mouth, and, behold, he reached me a full cup, which was full as it were with water, but the colour of it was like fire.

40 And I took it, and drank: and when I had drunk of it, my heart uttered understanding, and wisdom grew in my breast, for my spirit strengthened my memory:

41 and my mouth was opened, and shut no more.

42 The Highest gave understanding unto the five men, and they wrote the wonderful visions of the night that were told, which they knew not: and they sat forty days, and they wrote in the day, and at night they ate bread.

37. "Into the field." St. Basil (A.D. 329—379:), in his letter to Chilo, §. 5, alludes to this passage.

38. Compare Ezek. ii. 8, 9; iii. 1:

40. "My spirit strengthened my memory." This seems to have been a conjectural translation, as the printed text of the Latin did not appear to give a clear meaning. The manuscripts of the Latin, confirmed by the other Versions, read, "My spirit preserved the memory (of them)," retained the recollection of those things with the knowledge of which the Divine wisdom had inspired me. Comp. St. John xiv. 26.

42. "Wonderful visions of the night." The manuscripts of the Latin vary here, and as the scribes did not write during the night, there does not appear to be any special reason why the things which they wrote should be called, "visions of the night." It is clear, from the other Versions, that there is some mistake in the Latin, and according to them the reading of the original seems to have been, "they wrote in order those things that were told unto them, in signs, or characters, which they knew not." It is a general opinion that about the time of Ezra, after the return from the Babylonish Captivity, some change had taken place in the manner of writing the Hebrew character; and it has been supposed by some, though the complete change took place more gradually, that Ezra wrote out the law in the square "Chaldee" characters in which Hebrew is now written, instead of the older Phœnician characters, like those used by the Samaritans. See, for instance, St. Jerome in his *Preface to the Book of Kings* (*Prologus Galeatus*): and Prideaux, *Connection*, i. 5. There is, perhaps, a reference to something of this kind here.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

43. As for me, I spake in the day, and I held not my tongue by night.

² Or, *nine hundred and four.*

44. In forty days they wrote ²two hundred and four books.

45. And it came to pass, when the forty days were fulfilled, that the Highest spake, saying, The first that thou hast written publish openly, that the worthy and unworthy may read it :

46. but keep the seventy last, that thou mayest deliver them only to such as be wise among the people :

³ Or, *the light of knowledge.*

47. for in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and ³the stream of knowledge.

44, 45. "Forty days;" vv. 23, 36.

44. "Two hundred and four books." The manuscripts of the Latin Version have here, "nine hundred and four," as in the *Margin*; but the other Versions have preserved the true reading, "ninety-four." See also the next *Note*.

45. "The first that thou hast written publish openly." Compare vv. 26 and 6. The Syriac and Arabic translations read, "Those twenty-four books which thou hast first written publish," &c.; and this appears to have been the reading of the original. The twenty-four books open to all to read are the books of the Old Testament; and when to these are added the seventy secret or Apocryphal books (ver. 46.), there is made up the full number of the ninety-four books spoken of in the previous verse. The tradition of these hidden books seems to have been somewhat widely spread; Epiphanius, for instance, Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus (who died at an advanced age in 403 A.D.), in his marvellous narration of the manner in which was made the Greek translation (LXX.) of the Old Testament, speaks of the twenty-two Canonical and the seventy-two Apocryphal books (Epiphanius, *De Mensuris et Ponderibus*, chap. x.). The Hebrew alphabet has twenty-two letters, and the Greek alphabet twenty-four; and the number of the Canonical books was made twenty-four by reckoning Ruth and the Lamentations of Jeremiah as separate books.

46. "Keep the seventy last." See the preceding *Note*, and compare vv. 6 and 26.

"That thou mayest deliver them only to such as be wise among the people." See xii. 38, "Teach them to the wise of the people, whose hearts thou knowest may comprehend and keep these secrets."

47. "The stream of knowledge." For stream, or river, the *Margin* gives, "the light of knowledge." "Light" is a guess of the translators, who made a conjectural improvement, as they thought it, by omitting the first letter of the word rendered, "stream," or "river." It is not a good guess, as it confuses the metaphors which in the text repeat and enforce one idea, "spring," "fountain," "stream." For "river," the Arabic Version gives the paraphrase, "the full sea of knowledge." Compare Ecclus. xxiv. 31.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

48 And I did so

in the seventh year, in the sixth week, after five thousand years three months and twelve days since the creation.

And in those days Ezra was carried away and 49 received up into the place of those like unto himself, after he had written all these things. And he is 50 called the Scribe of the Wisdom of the most High for ever and ever.

The translators or transcribers of some of the Versions have also added their own subscriptions. Thus, at the end of the Æthiopic Version we find these words:—

“On him who caused that the book should be written, Ab’huna, the servant of Christ, and on him who wrote it, and on him who shall read it, and on him who shall faithfully hear His voice, on all of us, may God who is full of glory, have mercy. Amen. Amen. Amen.”

48—50. The Assumption of Esdras.

48. “And I did so.” The English Version, following the Latin, ends here; but in the other Versions there is an addition which, with some variations in the number and the date, is virtually the same in them all. The addition consists of a continuation of ver. 48, and a notice of the assumption of Esdras. In the Latin this conclusion has been omitted, because it would have shown too distinctly that the additional chapters (xv., xvi.) were not part of the original work. In the text above, the ending of the book is given from the Syriac Version.

“In the seventh year.” The Æthiopic Version reads, “In the fourth year of the sabbath of years.” Other variations are found in the details of the date in this verse, which need not be examined here. All the Versions, however, have “five thousand years,” the meaning of which is difficult to explain. In x. 45, the building of Solomon’s Temple would appear to be placed three thousand years after the creation of the world; and this Temple had not stood much more than four hundred years when it was destroyed by the Babylonians. In iii. 1, Esdras is said to have been living in Babylon, thirty years after the ruin of Sion.

“In the sixth week.” This would seem to mean, in the sixth week of years, or, forty-two years after the last Jubilee (Lev. xxv. 8—16. Josephus, *Antiq.* III. xii. 3.).

49. “Ezra was carried away and received up.” See above, ver. 9; and viii. 19.

“Into the place of those like unto himself;” xiv. 9, *Note*; iv. 36, *Note*.

“For ever and ever.” So also the Æthiopic. But the Arabic reads, “to Him” (that is, the Most High) “be honour and power for ever and ever.” The Armenian, “to whom be glory for ever and ever.”

“On him who shall read it, and on him who shall faithfully hear.” Compare Rev. i. 3.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

At the end of the Arabic Version there is added:—

“The First Book of Ezra, the scribe of the law, is finished, and the Second Book shall follow, thanks to him that giveth understanding for ever and ever. It was finished on the second day, on the seventeenth day of the month Barmahat, in the year of the holy martyrs one thousand and fifty one. O Lord, be merciful to the sinner, the scribe, and to the other sons of baptism! Amen.”

“On the second day,” that is, of the week.

“On the seventeenth day of the month Barmahat.” March 12.

“The year of the holy martyrs.” The æra of the martyrs, or of Diocletian, extensively used in the East, was reckoned to begin A.D. 284, so that the date when this transcription was made would be A.D. 1335.

“Sons of baptism.” Compare such expressions as “sons of the covenant,” Acts iii. 25; “sons of the resurrection,” St. Luke xx. 36; “sons of light,” “sons of the day,” 1 Thess. v. 5. St. John xii. 36.

This concluding portion of 4 Esdras (xv., xvi) is not a continuation of the larger work (iii.—xiv.), of which it is made to form a part in the printed editions, though entirely unconnected with it. In the manuscripts it is distinguished as a separate work, and generally entitled the “Fifth Book of Esdras.” There usually follows after the end of chap. xiv, some such note as, “Here endeth the Fourth Book of Esdras, and beginneth the Fifth” (see *Introduction*).

Some have thought that these two chapters once formed the end of a book of which the beginning was formed by chaps. i., ii. of 2 Esdras. But there is no sufficient reason to induce us to suppose this. The subjects of the two works have no connection. The “Second Book of the prophet Esdras” (i. 1.), that is, 2 Esd. i. and ii., speaks of the rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles, and concludes with bidding Esdras tell what great wonders of the Lord he had seen in the vision of the saints on Mount Sion, crowned by the Son of God. “The Fifth Book of Esdras” (xv., xvi.), which, though so called, does not, like the other two, claim to be written in the name of “Esdras,” treats of entirely different matters. It is a denunciation of woe against the nations, and a warning to the servants of the Lord not to fail in the season of persecution.

These chapters describe times of great confusion and suffering, of wars and famine; but in our present uncertainty as to the time and place in which they were written, we can only make conjectures as to the particular calamities which the writer may have intended to describe. As he represents the Church as suffering persecution (xv. 8, 10, 21, 22, 53, 56; xvi. 68—76.), we may suppose that these chapters were written during the Decian persecution, in the middle of the third century after Christ; or in that instigated by Macrianus in the reign of Valerian, in which, among other victims, Sixtus, Bishop of Rome, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and Laurence the Deacon, suffered martyrdom. The names of the two last are noted in the calendar of our Prayer-Book, on August 10, and September 26.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XIV.

The latter part of this third century was a season of great misery and disorder. During the period, less than fifty years, which intervened between the death of Alexander Severus and the accession of Diocletian (A.D. 235—284.), there were some twenty emperors, or possessors for a brief space of the imperial title, out of whom it is difficult to find one who did not come to a violent end. In the reign of Gallienus there are reckoned up nineteen "tyrants," usurpers or claimants of independent power, in different parts of the distracted empire. Whoever lost or won the precarious throne, the result was generally much the same to the people,—wars, executions, suspicions, misery, insecurity, and fresh exactions to supply the demands of a greedy and turbulent soldiery.

The northern barbarians also, who afterwards broke up the fabric of the empire, now began not only to seriously threaten the frontiers, but sometimes to ravage its provinces (see xv. 34.). The Emperor Decius was defeated and slain by the Goths (A.D. 251.), who not long before had taken Philippopolis in Thrace, when, it is said, a hundred thousand persons were massacred in the sacking of the city. A few years later, in the reign of Valerian, the Goths advanced almost within sight of Rome, and in this and the succeeding reign of Gallienus ravaged many parts of Asia Minor. In one expedition, they captured Trebizond; in another, Nicomedia, Nice, and other cities of Bithynia, carrying off an immense booty; in a third expedition, they burnt the famous temple of Diana at Ephesus (Acts xix.), which, after repeated calamities, had each time arisen from its ruins with renewed magnificence. In the time of Aurelian (A.D. 270.), the Almanni crossed the Danube, and penetrated Italy as far as Umbria. In the reign of Tacitus, the Alani (A.D. 276) ravaged Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia, and Cilicia (see also *Note* on xv. 46.). Nor was Egypt (see xv. 11, 12 : xvi. 1.) without its full share of the troubles which distracted the rest of the empire. During the times of disorder which followed the capture of the Emperor Valerian by the Persians (A.D. 260.), the great and turbulent city of Alexandria was for some twelve years the prey of such violent and almost incessant discords that a large part of the city, with its palaces and museum, was destroyed. Dionysius, who was then Bishop of Alexandria, has described this period of sedition and the terrible pestilence which followed. One portion of the city was inaccessible to those who dwelt in another portion, the harbour was polluted with blood and corpses, and from the putrefaction of these dead bodies there arose a horrible stench and sickness; it has been calculated from his statements, that one-half of the population had perished. Some extracts of these letters of Dionysius are preserved in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, who was born some four or five years after the death of Dionysius. See vii. 21, and 22. Gibbon (chap. x.) accepts these statements of Dionysius, and is inclined to suspect, that, if we may venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, "war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed in a few years the moiety of the human species." See also *Note* on vv. 10, 11.

St. Cyprian (who was Bishop of Carthage A.D. 248—258.), in like manner (*Ad Demetrianum*, p. 187, ed. Fell), speaks of the load of anxious fears caused by the frequent wars, sterility, and famine, and the destruction of the human race by pestilence, as signs that might lead men to think that the day of judgment was at hand. He wrote a book to console and encourage the Christians, in the plague which desolated Carthage and

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

CHAPTER XV.

1 This prophecy is certain. 5 God will take vengeance upon the wicked, 12 upon Egypt. 28 An horrible vision. 43 Babylon and Asia are threatened.

BEHOLD, speak thou in the ears of my people the words of prophecy, which I will put in thy mouth, saith the Lord :

2 and cause them to be written in paper : for they are faithful and true.

3 Fear not the imaginations against thee, let not the incredulity of them trouble thee, that speak against thee.

^a John 3. 36. 4 For ^aall the unfaithful shall die in their unfaithfulness.

5 Behold, saith the Lord, I will bring plagues upon the world ; the sword, famine, death, and destruction.

6 For wickedness hath exceedingly polluted the whole earth, and their hurtful works are fulfilled.

7 Therefore saith the Lord,

other parts of the world in the year 252 A.D. He also wrote two other treatises, required by the exigencies of his troublous times ; one, to exhort the Christians in Africa bravely to endure persecution, and not to shrink back from martyrdom ; and another to show the excellence of patience.

CHAPTER XV.

1. "Speak thou in the ears of my people;" Exod. xi. 2. Judg. vii. 3. Jer. xxviii. 7 ; xxxvi. 6, 10, 13, 14.

"The words . . . which I will put in thy mouth;" Is. li. 16. Jer. i. 9 ; v. 14. Deut. xviii. 18.

2. "Cause them to be written." Jer. xxx. 2 ; xxxvi. 2.

"In paper;" 2 John 12. Compare Tobit vii. 14. The earliest "paper" was made from strips of the papyrus plant: for works of any great length, these were made into long rolls, which were wound round upon a stick. From the word here and in 2 John rendered "paper," our word "charter" is taken.

"For they are faithful and true;" Rev. xxi. 5 ; xxii. 6.

3. "Fear not." Compare Jer. i. 8, 17. Ezek. ii. 6 ; iii. 9.

4. "The unfaithful shall die in their unfaithfulness." Compare Ezek. iii. 18, 19 ; xviii. 18.

5. "Plagues." See on xvi. 5.

"Famine." See vv. 19, 49, 57, 58 ; xvi. 18, 19, 22, 34, 46.

6. "Their hurtful works are fulfilled." Compare Gen. xv. 16. Dan. viii. 23. St. Matt. xxiii. 32.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

8 I will hold my tongue no more as touching their wickedness, which they profanely commit, neither will I suffer them in those things, in which they wickedly exercise themselves: behold, the ^binnocent and righteous blood crieth unto me, and the souls of the just complain continually.

^b Rev. 6. 10.
& 19. 2.

9 And therefore, saith the Lord, I will surely avenge them, and receive unto me all the innocent blood from among them.

10 Behold, my people is led as a flock to the slaughter: I will not suffer them now to dwell in the land of Egypt:

11 but I will bring them with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm, and smite Egypt with plagues, as before, and will destroy all the land thereof.

12 Egypt shall mourn, and the foundation of it shall be smitten with the plague and punishment that God shall bring upon it.

8. "I will hold my tongue no more." Compare Ps. l. 21. Hab. i. 13; and also Eccles. viii. 11. Is. xxvi. 10.

"The innocent . . . blood crieth." Compare Gen. iv. 10.

"Crieth." Compare Deut. xxiv. 15. James v. 4.

"The souls of the just complain continually." Rev. vi. 9, 10, "The souls of them that were slain for the word of God . . . cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Compare above, 4 Esdr. iv. 35.

9. "I will surely avenge them." St. Luke xviii. 8. Rev. xviii. 20; xix. 2. Deut. xxxii. 43. Ps. xciv. 1.

10. "My people is led as a flock to the slaughter." Compare Ps. xlv. 22. If "Egypt" is to be understood literally and not figuratively, there may be reference here to the persecution under Decius (cir. 250 A.D.), which, however, did not arise from the issuing of the emperor's edict, but was begun by the populace of Alexandria a whole year before. The persecution is described in a letter from the Bishop, Dionysius, to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch (preserved by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 41, 42.). The houses of the Christians were plundered (compare xvi. 72.), the most precious things stolen, the rest thrown out and burned, so that the streets looked as if the city had been taken by an enemy. The names are given of many martyrs, and their sufferings detailed. Some were beheaded, some burned, others slain after various kinds of torture. A vast number of those who sought to escape perished miserably, as they wandered in the desert and in the mountains, by hunger and thirst, by disease, and the attacks of robbers and wild beasts. Compare xvi. 68—75.

11, 12. "I will . . . smite Egypt with plagues . . . Egypt shall mourn." See the *Note* at the beginning of the chapter. It may be

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

13 They that till the ground shall mourn: for their seeds shall fail through the blasting and hail, and with a fearful constellation.

14 Woe to the world and them that dwell therein!

15 For the sword and their destruction draweth nigh, and one people shall stand up to fight against another, and swords in their hands.

16 For there shall be sedition among men, and invading one another; they shall not regard their kings nor princes, and the course of their actions shall stand in their power.

17 A man shall desire to go into a city, and shall not be able.

18 For because of their pride the cities shall be troubled, the houses shall be destroyed, and men shall be afraid.

added, that Egypt was for some years, during the reign of Gallienus (A.D. 261—268.), full of disorder and tumults, through the revolts of several competitors for the throne, such as Macrianus and his two sons, and *Æmilianus*, who for a little while, until they met with a violent death, claimed to hold the imperial title. At a later period, in A.D. 296, Alexandria was captured by Diocletian, after a siege of eight months: "Many thousands of the citizens perished in a promiscuous slaughter, " and there were few obnoxious persons in Egypt who escaped a "sentence of death, or at least of exile." The cities of Busiris and Coptos were, by the orders of Diocletian, utterly destroyed (*Gibbon*, chap. xiii.).

13. "Through the blasting and hail." Some words appear to have been omitted here, which are found in the best manuscripts: "And " their trees" (compare ver. 62.) "shall be wasted through the blasting " and hail."

"A fearful constellation." In ver. 40, the same words are translated, "a horrible star." The word seems used in this place to denote weather, or season (see also v. 39—41; and *Note* on ver. 35.). The fearful famine which for three years desolated France, from 1030 to 1032, was caused in great part by incessant rains.

14. "Woe to the world and them that dwell therein!" Compare Rev. viii. 13; xii. 12.

16. "Invading." Rather, "prevailing one against another."

"The course of their actions shall stand in their power." There is some corruption here in the Latin text, and the guess of the translators does not seem to give any very clear meaning. The reading of the most ancient manuscript, with a very slight conjectural alteration, gives the words, "they shall not regard their king, nor the chief of " the princes in their power." Compare Hab. i. 10 (of the invading Chaldeans), "they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a " scorn unto them."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

19 A man shall have no pity upon his neighbour, but shall destroy their houses with the sword, and spoil their goods, because of the lack of bread, and for great tribulation.

20 Behold, saith God, I will call together all the kings of the earth to reverence me, which are from the rising of the sun, from the south, from the east, and Libanus; to turn themselves one against another, and repay the things that they have done to them.

21 Like as they do yet this day unto my chosen, so will I do also, and recompense in their bosom. Thus saith the Lord God;

22 My right hand shall not spare the sinners, and my sword shall not cease over them that shed innocent blood upon the earth.

23 The fire is gone forth from his wrath, and hath consumed the foundations of the earth, and the sinners, like the straw that is kindled.

24 Woe to them that sin, and keep not my commandments! saith the Lord.

19. "A man shall have no pity upon his neighbour . . . because of the lack of bread." Cp. Deu. xxviii. 54, 55. "The lack of bread," ver. 5.

"For great tribulation." The extremity of suffering extinguishes compassion, and engenders selfishness and despair.

20. "I will call together all the kings of the earth to reverence me." "To reverence me" is unmeaning here: read rather, with the most ancient manuscripts, "to move." The alteration or indistinctness of a letter or two might easily have occasioned the error in the Latin. "I call together to move:" I summon and set in commotion all the kings of the earth.

"From the east;" or, South-East. "Libanus" seems to be used to designate the North.

21. Compare ver. 56 and *Note*. "My chosen." The old name of Israel, "chosen," or "elect" (4 Esdr. v. 23—27. Deut. vii. 6. Ps. xxxiii. 12; cvi. 5.), is here, and in ver. 56, applied to the Church (1 Pet. ii. 9.).

"Recompense in their bosom." Compare ver. 55. Ps. lxxix. 12. Is. lxxv. 6, 7; and St. Luke vi. 38.

21—27. These verses, from "Thus saith the Lord God" to "come upon the whole earth," are cited by Gildas, a writer in England, whose "Epistle" is generally assigned to the middle of the sixth century, though some would place it as late as the seventh century. Gildas quotes the verses as the words of the "blessed prophet Esdras," together with passages from Ezekiel and Malachi, and applies them to denounce the evils and corruptions of his age. Gildas also cites portions of xvi. 3—12.

23. "The fire is gone forth from his wrath," xvi. 9. . . . "hath consumed the foundations of the earth," xvi. 15.

"Like the straw that is kindled." See on ver. 61.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

25 I will not spare them : go your way, ye children, from the power, defile not my sanctuary.

26 For the Lord knoweth all them that sin against him, and therefore delivereth he them unto death and destruction.

27 For now are the plagues come upon the whole earth, and ye shall remain in them : for God shall not deliver you, because ye have sinned against him.

28 Behold an horrible vision, and the appearance thereof from the east :

29 where the nations of the dragons of Arabia shall come out with many chariots, and the multitude of them shall be carried as the wind upon

25. "I will not spare them." Compare Jer. xiii. 14. Ezek. v. 11; vii. 4, 9; vii. 18; ix. 10; xxiv. 14.

"Go your way, ye children, from the power." Those who adopted this reading understood "power," we may suppose, to mean "the tyrannical and wicked power;" and took the passage in the same general sense as Rev. xviii. 4. 2 Cor. vi. 17, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The true reading, however, preserved by the Amiens manuscript, and in the quotation by Gildas (see above, vv. 21—27.), is "apostate children." "From the power," is in Latin very like "apostate," and the scribe might easily mistake one for the other. The Greek writer may have taken "apostate children" from the Greek Version of Is. xxx. 1, where the English Version gives, "rebellious children."

"Defile not my sanctuary." Compare Ezek. v. 11; xxiii. 38, 39; and the places referred to, 1 Esdr. i. 49.

26. "The Lord knoweth all them that sin against him;" xvi. 54, 63, 64.

28—33. The War between the "Arabians" and the "Assyrians."

29. "The nations of the dragons of Arabia." There may possibly be reference here to the victories gained by Odenathus over the Persian king, Sapor, who now ruled the territories which had been once included in the wide dominion of the Assyrians. Odenathus, who was himself of Arabian descent, had consolidated the power of the Arabian tribes, and issuing forth from his capital, Palmyra, drove Sapor, after the successful invasion in which he had ravaged Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia (see *Note*, at the beginning of this chapter), back with much loss beyond the Euphrates, and besieged Ctesiphon on the Tigris. Odenathus was acknowledged as Augustus by Gallienus (A.D. 264.), and made another successful expedition against the Persians, and a second time laid siege to Ctesiphon.

"Dragons" seem to mean here some kind of serpent, as often in Greek and Latin writers. "Dragon" is used for serpent in the English

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

earth, that all they which hear them may fear and tremble.

30 Also the Carmanians raging in wrath shall go forth as the wild boars of the wood, and with great power shall they come, and join battle with them, and shall waste a portion of the land of the Assyrians.

31 And then shall the dragons have the upper hand, remembering their nature; and if they shall turn themselves, conspiring together in great power to persecute them,

32 then these shall be troubled, and keep silence through their power, and shall flee.

33 And from the land of the Assyrians shall the enemy besiege them, and consume some of them, and in their host shall be fear and dread, and strife² among their kings.

² Or, *against*.

34 Behold clouds from the east and from the north unto the south, and they are very horrible to look upon, full of wrath and storm.

translation (which in these places follows the Greek Version) of Deut. xxxii. 33. Ps. xci. 13. In Exod. vii. 9, 10, 11, where the Greek translation has "dragon," the English renders "serpent."

30. "Carmanians." This name is slightly altered by conjecture. as the Latin copies read Carmonians, a word which is not known as the name of any people. Carmania (Kerman) was a province on the Northern shore of the Persian Gulf, inhabited by a people akin in manners and language to the Persians. It still retains its ancient name, and Kerman forms a territory in the South-eastern part of the Persian Empire.

"The wild boars of the wood;" Ps. lxxx. 13.

33. "And consume some of them." The Latin has, "one of them." It may possibly be conjectured that there is an allusion to the assassination of Odenathus by his nephew Mœonius, at Emesa in Syria, in A.D. 267. The word rendered "the enemy," may more closely and literally be rendered, "the liar in wait." Odenathus was succeeded by his wife Zenobia, who for some years ruled Syria and the adjacent parts of the empire, till, in A.D. 273, her armies were defeated by Aurelian, and Palmyra was taken. After the departure of Aurelian, Palmyra revolted, and the return of the emperor was followed by a frightful massacre of the inhabitants. Palmyra never recovered from this blow, and gradually fell into decay.

The Doom of "Babylon."

34—45. This passage, as well as the following passage, vv. 46—63. is in the form of a prediction of woes to come, which we may take to be

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

^c Matt. 24. 21. 35 They shall smite one upon another, and ^c they shall smite down a great multitude of stars upon
^d Rev. 14. 20. the earth, even their own star; and ^d blood shall be from the sword unto the belly,

² Or, 36 and dung of men unto the camel's ² hough.

postern, or, later.

37 And there shall be great fearfulness and trembling upon earth: and they that see the wrath shall be afraid, and trembling shall come upon them.

38 And then shall there come great storms from

not so much a narrative of past events related under the guise of a prophecy, but rather a forecasting and anticipation of miseries which the present state of things seemed to render probable and impending. Such anticipations are not always fulfilled, nor need we, thus taking the passages as denunciations of woe against the oppressor, try to fit their statements in detail to supposed corresponding events in the history of the times. In their general purport, however, they are not inapplicable to the troubled condition of the empire in the latter part of the third century; for instance, in the reign of Gallienus. Many expressions in these predictions against "Babylon" (vv. 34—45.) and "Asia" (vv. 46—63.), are taken from Rev. xviii., where there is foretold the destruction of the mystical Babylon.

34. "Clouds from the east and from the north." It is not improbable that there may be reference here to the threatening aspect of the Gothic and Scythian tribes, who now could with great difficulty be kept beyond the borders of the empire, and at times, as has been noticed above at the beginning of this chapter, broke through and plundered the provinces far inland, not only on the North, but on the East, extending their ravages to Greece and Asia Minor. The Emperor Decius had been defeated and slain, and though Claudius in his short reign of two years held back the Goths, and obtained the name of "Gothicus," yet on his death, in 270 A.D., Aurelian was glad to make a treaty, and resigned to the Goths and Vandals a great territory beyond the Danube.

35. "They shall smite down a great multitude of stars upon the earth." The English Version here seems to imply that by "stars" the translators understood princes, generals, great men, and rulers (compare St. Matt. xxiv. 29. Is. xiii. 10; xiv. 12. Rev. viii. 10.); their ruin and death being described under the figure of stars dashed down from heaven by the crash of the storm-laden clouds. But the literal translation, "they shall pour out" (this is the reading of the manuscripts) "an abundant star," when compared with vv. 13, 40, 41, and 44, rather intimates that "star" here means rain and hail, dreadful weather and destructive storms, thus carrying out further the imagery suggested by "clouds" (ver. 34.), "storms," "winds" (38, 39.).

"Their own star." The ruin and desolation they were appointed to discharge.

"Blood shall be . . . unto the belly." The manuscripts add, "of a horse." Compare Rev. xiv. 20.

38. See *Note* at the beginning of this chapter.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

the south, and from the north, and another part from the west.

39 And strong winds shall arise from the east, and shall open it; and the cloud which he raised up in wrath, and the star stirred to cause fear toward the east and west wind, shall be destroyed.

40 The great and mighty clouds shall be lifted up full of wrath, and the star, that they may make all the earth afraid, and them that dwell therein; and they shall pour out over every high and eminent place an horrible star,

41 fire, and hail, and flying swords, and many waters, that all fields may be full, and all rivers, with the abundance of great waters.

42 And they shall break down the cities and walls, mountains and hills, trees of the wood, and grass of the meadows, and their corn.

39. "The star stirred to cause fear." Star is here used (compare Rev. viii. 10, 11; ix. 1.) to denote a power or person exercising a malignant influence upon men (see on ver. 40.).

"Shall be destroyed." It has been conjectured that there may be an allusion to Aureolus, a formidable competitor, who occupied Milan and threatened Italy. The Emperor Gallienus was slain by treachery (A.D. 268.), while besieging Milan; but Aureolus was soon afterwards put to death on the surrender of the city.

40. "Clouds shall be lifted up full of wrath, and the star." Stars were once supposed—and especially among the Babylonians—not only to mark out and rule the seasons, but to exercise an influence for good or evil on the fortunes of nations and men. We still retain, as figures of speech, memorials of a bygone superstition, such expressions as "ill-starred," "he was born under an unlucky planet," "his star is in the ascendant:" thus, "star" is not unfrequently employed in a general way to denote fate, destiny, lot, fortune. In the midst of dark and threatening clouds, there arose the star foreboding evil to Babylon.

"That they may make all the earth afraid." The manuscripts suggest that here, as in ver. 43, we should read, "that they may destroy." See ver. 42.

"They shall pour out . . . an horrible star." Compare vv. 13 and 40. The next sentence explains "star" as denoting the storms, rain, and hail, under which figures are described the misfortunes portended to Babylon.

41. "Flying swords." If we take these words as intending to denote some portent appearing in the sky, we may compare Josephus (*Wars*, VI. v. 3.), who notes among the strange signs which announced the approaching doom of Jerusalem, "a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

43 And they shall go stedfastly unto Babylon,
² Or, *destroy.* and ² make her afraid.

44 They shall come to her, and besiege her, the star and all wrath shall they pour out upon her: then shall the dust and smoke go up unto the heaven, and all they that be about her shall bewail her.

45 And they that remain under her shall do service unto them that have put her in fear.

³ Or, *like unto Babylon.* 46 And thou, Asia, that art ³ partaker of the hope of Babylon, and art the glory of her person:

43. "They shall go stedfastly unto Babylon, and make her afraid." The *Margin*, following an emendation of Junius (see on xiii. 2.), has the true reading, "shall destroy her." The same word occurs again ver. 60, and xvi. 34 (see also ver. 40.). Compare Rev. xviii. 8, spoken of the mystical Babylon, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly "burned with fire."

44. "The star and all wrath shall they pour out upon her." Compare ver. 35, *Note*; and ver. 40, "they shall pour . . . an horrible star." "Star;" that is, the doom presaged, the misfortunes and sufferings threatened, and now actually inflicted and endured.

"Then shall the dust and smoke go up unto the heaven." Compare Rev. xviii. 9, 18; xix. 3; and see ver. 62. Babylon can hardly be supposed to denote Babylon on the Euphrates, which had long been decayed and ruined; but "Babylon," as in Rev. xviii., stands as the symbolic name of the power of the heathen world persecuting the Church. In this place the reference is to Rome, as the capital of the empire.

"Shall bewail her." Compare what is said, Rev. xviii. 9, 15, 19, of the mystical Babylon.

46—63. The Woe threatened against Asia.

This passage, like the preceding, is prophetic, denouncing woes which the writer thought likely to happen, or justly deserved. "Asia" here seems used in a general, perhaps a symbolical, sense. Portions of the East were from time to time subjected to Rome, yet still "Asia," where formerly the Parthians and now the Persians held sway, might stand as the emblem of an independent and rival power. By becoming partaker of the crimes of "Babylon," "Asia" had made herself liable to be sharer in her doom.

46. "And thou, Asia." Asia is again, in xvi. 1, joined with Babylon, as one of the lands against which woe is denounced. It is uncertain what countries we are to include in "Asia" here, but, as intimated above, Asia would seem to extend as far East as Persia. The name Asia, which afterwards was applied to the whole continent as known to the ancients, appears to have been originally given by the Greeks to the plain of the Cayster, in which Ephesus is situated (Homer, *Iliad*, ii.

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47 woe be unto thee, thou wretch, because thou hast made thyself like unto her; and hast decked thy daughters in whoredom, that they might please and glory in thy lovers, which have alway desired to commit whoredom with thee!

48 Thou hast followed her that is hated in all her works and inventions: therefore saith God,

49 ° I will send plagues upon thee; widowhood, ° Rev. 18.
7, 8.

461.). In the New Testament, "Asia" denotes a comparatively small province, of which Ephesus was the capital (Acts xvi. 6; xix. 22. 1 Pet. i. 1.). Kings, like Antiochus and Seleucus, whose capital was Antioch, on the Orontes in Syria, are called Kings of "Asia" (1 Macc. viii. 6; xi. 13; xii. 39; xiii. 32.); but in xvi. 1, "Asia" is distinguished from Syria. If, however, we assume that this book was written soon after the middle of the third century after Christ, there would be few parts of "Asia," taking the name in its somewhat uncertain sense, which did not suffer from many calamities. Nearly the whole of "Asia Minor," as far as Ephesus, was ravaged by the Goths, or other barbarians (see *Note* prefixed to chap. xv.). Artaxerxes, having overthrown in three great battles the dominion of the Parthians, who had formerly for a time contended on not unequal terms even with the power of Rome, had restored the Persian Empire; and his son Sapor added Armenia to his dominions, captured some important garrisons from the Romans, and "spread devastation and terror on either side of the Euphrates." The Emperor Valerian, anxious to defend the empire, and avenge this insult, crossed the Euphrates, but was defeated and taken captive (A.D. 260.); and Sapor, advancing westward, ravaged Syria and Cilicia. The magnificent city of Antioch was pillaged and destroyed, its inhabitants were slain or carried away captive; Tarsus was ruined; Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia, was betrayed by treachery, and many thousands of the inhabitants massacred. When Sapor retired, he left "behind him" a wasted desert, while he transported into Persia the people and the "treasures of the provinces" (*Gibbon*, chap. x.).

"Partaker of the hope of Babylon." The oldest manuscripts do not read "hope," but a word which we may translate by "splendour," or some similar word.

47. "Woe be unto thee, thou wretch;" or, miserable, or, unhappy one. Compare Bar. iv. 31—34.

"And hast decked thy daughters in whoredom," &c. Compare vv. 54, 55. Rev. xvii. 2, 5; xviii. 7, 9.

"Whoredom . . . lovers." Compare also, for instance, Jer. iii. 1, 9; xiii. 27. Ezek. xvi. 20—37; xxiii. 5, 9—21, 29, 30. Hos. ii. 5—13. Idolatry and immorality are closely connected together (Num. xxv. Rev. ii. 14.).

48. "Thou hast followed her that is hated." That is, Babylon. "Thou hast followed:" hast imitated. Thus, in the New Testament, often "follow," and "followers;" e.g. 2 Thess. iii. 7, 9. 1 Cor. iv. 16; xi. 1. Eph. v. 1. 1 Thess. i. 6; ii. 14. Heb. vi. 12.

49. "I will send plagues upon thee;" Rev. xviii. 8.

"Widowhood;" Rev. xviii. 7. Is. xlvii. 9.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

poverty, famine, sword, and pestilence, to waste thy houses with destruction and death.

50 And the glory of thy power shall be dried up as a flower, when the heat shall arise that is sent over thee.

51 Thou shalt be weakened as a poor woman with stripes, and as one chastised with wounds, so that the mighty and lovers shall not be able to receive thee.

52 Would I with jealousy have so proceeded against thee, saith the Lord,

53 if thou hadst not always slain my chosen, exalting the stroke of thine hands, and saying over their ² dead, when thou wast drunken,

54 Set forth the beauty of thy countenance?

55 The reward of thy whoredom shall be in thy bosom, therefore shalt thou receive recompence.

"Famine, sword;" vv. 57, 58. Compare xvi. 22; and above, ver. 5.

50. "As a flower, when the heat shall arise." Compare Is. xxviii. 1, 4. James i. 11.

52. "With jealousy;" i.e. indignation and wrath. The same word is translated "be angry," and "hate" (xvi. 48, 50.). For this use of "jealousy," compare, for instance, Ps. lxxix. 5. Ezek. xxiii. 25.

53. "If thou hadst not always slain." Compare the sentiment in Judg. viii. 19.

"My chosen." So ver. 56. See on ver. 21.

"When thou wast drunken." Compare Rev. xvii. 6, "drunken with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Compare xviii. 24.

During the Decian persecution, the Christians suffered in Asia as well as in the West. Among the most distinguished of the martyrs were Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Babylas, Bishop of Antioch (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 39.). The severe persecutions under Sapor the Second, the last of which continued for forty years, belong to a later period (see *Sozomen*, ii. 9—15.); but the hostile influences which brought about these persecutions were at work, though with less violent and evident results, during the earlier period of the restored Persian monarchy, under Artaxerxes and Sapor the First (compare *Gibbon*, chap. viii.).

54. "Set forth the beauty of thy countenance." According to the present punctuation these words are spoken by "Asia," insulting over the "chosen" who have been slain. It seems, however, better to put a stop at the end of ver. 53, and to take "saying," or "speaking," absolutely, in the sense of making a speech, a mocking and insulting oration over their death. "Set forth the beauty of thy countenance" would then be the prophet's ironical address to "Asia," and is to be connected with the next verse. Compare vv. 47, and 63.

55. "The reward of thy whoredom." Compare ver. 47. "shall

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XV.

56 Like as thou hast done unto my chosen, saith the Lord, even so shall God do unto thee, and shall deliver thee into mischief.

57 Thy children shall die of hunger, and thou shalt fall through the sword: thy cities shall be broken down, and all thine shall perish with the sword in the field.

58 They that be in the mountains shall die of hunger, and eat their own flesh, and drink their own blood, for very hunger of bread, and thirst of water.

59 Thou as unhappy shalt come through the sea, and receive plagues again.

60 And in the passage they shall rush on the idle city, and shall destroy some portion of thy land, and

"be in thy bosom." "Shall be" is supplied by the translators: it is better to supply "is."

56. "Like as thou hast done . . . so shall God do unto thee." Repeated, with some alteration, from ver. 21. Compare Jer. l. 15, 29, "as she hath done, do unto her." Rev. xviii. 6. Ps. cxxxvii. 8. Ezek. xxxv. 15. Obad. 15. This was the principle of requital of the Law (compare Deut. xix. 19, 21. Lev. xxiv. 20. Exod. xxi. 23—25.).

"My chosen." See on ver. 21.

57. "Thy children." Compare St. Luke xix. 44; and 2 Esdr. ii. 2, 4, 5, 15.

58. "Eat their own flesh, and drink their own blood." Compare Is. ix. 20; xlix. 26.

59. "Thou as unhappy shalt come through the sea." "Through the sea" is merely a mistake of some later transcriber, writing inadvertently, by an error which can be exhibited to an English reader, "permaria" for "primaria," the reading of the best manuscripts: in manuscript the two words would be almost identical in appearance. "O first and chiefest of all unhappy ones, thou shalt come and receive plagues again."

60. "They shall rush on the idle city." Rather, "shall dash down" to ruin and destruction. "Idle" is the reading of the manuscripts; the printed text has "slain." As "slain" and "idle" would not be very unlike in the Latin, the translators here, as well as in xvi. 68, seem to have given "idle" by a conjecture, which in this place is confirmed by more accurate subsequent investigation. "Idle" here seems used in the sense of living in ease and security, not expecting any attack. "She saith 'in her heart, I sit as a queen . . . and shall see no sorrow' (Rev. xviii. 7.). Unless we prefer so to render the passage as to make it mean, 'they shall with violence destroy the city, so that henceforth 'it is idle;' that is, no longer the crowded resort of traffickers and pleasure-seekers, but silent, deserted, and empty. Compare Is. lx. 15. 'thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee.' Compare below, xvi. 32. See also Rev. xviii. 22, 23, 'And

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

consume part of thy glory, and shall return to Babylon that was destroyed.

61 And thou shalt be cast down by them as stubble, and they shall be unto thee as fire;

62 and shall consume thee, and thy cities, thy land, and thy mountains; all thy woods and thy fruitful trees shall they burn up with fire.

63 Thy children shall they carry away captive, and, look, what thou hast, they shall spoil it, and

² Or, *blemish*. ² mar the beauty of thy face.

CHAPTER XVI.

¹ *Babylon and other places are threatened with plagues that cannot be avoided, 23 and with desolation. 40 The servants of the Lord must look for troubles: 51 and not hide their sins, 74 but leave them, and they shall be delivered.*

WOE be unto thee, Babylon, and Asia! woe be unto thee, Egypt, and Syria!

2 Gird up yourselves with cloths of sack and hair, bewail your children, and be sorry; for your destruction is at hand.

"the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee," &c. Whether the writer is referring to any particular city, or whether his prophecy was fulfilled, we have no means of knowing now: many cities in "Asia" suffered great calamities in those troublous times.

"Destroy some portion of thy land, and consume part of thy glory." This partial desolation seems hardly consistent with the terrible calamities and ruin denounced in the other portions of the prediction (vv. 57—59, 61—63).

"Return to Babylon that was destroyed;" vv. 43—45.

61. Compare ver. 23; and xvi. 6, 9. Obad. 1, 18. Mal. iv. 1. Nah. i. 10. Is. xlvii. 14, "Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame."

61, 62. "With fire." Compare ver. 44; and Rev. xviii. 9, 18, "the smoke of her burning."

63. "The beauty of thy face." See on ver. 54.

CHAPTER XVI.

1—35. The Woes of the Nations.

1. "Babylon . . . Asia . . . Egypt . . . Syria." See *Notes* prefixed to chap. xv.; and *Notes* on xv. 11, 12, and 46.

2. "Gird up yourselves with cloths of sack." Compare Is. xxxii. 11. Jer. iv. 8; vi. 26; xlix. 3.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

3 A sword is sent upon you, and who may turn it back?

4 A fire is sent among you, and who may quench it?

5 Plagues are sent unto you, and what is he that may drive them away?

6 May any man drive away an hungry lion in the wood? or may any one quench the fire in stubble, when it hath begun to burn?

7 May one turn again the arrow that is shot of a strong archer?

8 The mighty Lord sendeth the plagues, and who is he that can drive them away?

9 A fire shall go forth from his wrath, and who is he that may quench it?

10 He shall cast lightnings, and who shall not fear? he shall thunder, and who shall not be afraid?

3—12. Some portion of this eloquent passage is quoted by an English writer, Gildas, whose "Epistle" is generally considered to have been written about the middle of the sixth century after Christ. He cites parts of vv. 3, 4, 5, ver. 6, and vv. 8—11, with the first part of ver. 12, applying them as descriptive of the calamities of his own land. Gildas also cites xv. 21—27.

3. "A sword." Compare Ezek. xiv. 17.

4. "A fire." See on ver. 9.

"Who may quench it?" vv. 4, 6, 9, 15. Compare Is. i. 31. Jer. iv. 4; vii. 20; xxi. 12. Ezek. xx. 47, 48. Amos v. 6.

5, 8. "Plagues." "Plagues" do not here denote in any special way pestilence or sickness, but in a more general way, as in xv. 5, any blows or misfortunes inflicted on man; thus, we speak of the "plagues of Egypt," "the plague of hail" (Exod. ix. 14. Rev. xvi. 21; and above, xv. 11, 12. Compare Deut. xxviii. 61. Rev. xviii. 4, 8, &c.). The Latin here, as in vv. 14, 16, 18, 21, 37, 39; xv. 27, has "evils," as indeed it is rendered in ver. 21. In ver. 19, and xv. 11, 12, the Latin has, "blow;" another word is used for "pestilence" in xv. 49. In Bar. ii. 2, 7; iii. 4, we have "plagues," used in the same general way, for evils and sufferings sent as punishments.

5. "What is he?" In vv. 3, 4, 8—11, "Who is he?" So here also in the Latin.

6. "An hungry lion." Comp. Is. v. 29. Jer. v. 6. Hos. v. 14; xiii. 7, 8.

"The fire in stubble." Compare xv. 23, 61. Is. v. 24, "as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff."

9. "A fire shall go forth from his wrath." Repeated from xv. 23.

"A fire." Compare ver. 4. Ezek. xx. 47. Jer. iv. 4; vii. 20; xxi. 14.

4, 6, 9. If the reader will call to mind any descriptions he may have read of bush and prairie fires, they will help him to form a more vivid idea of the terror and desolation represented by the onward rushing of the flames, devouring not only the dry grass, but everything else that they meet with in their way.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

11 The Lord shall threaten, and who shall not be utterly beaten to powder at his presence?

12 The earth quaketh, and the foundations thereof; the sea ariseth up with waves from the deep, and the waves of it are troubled, and the fishes thereof also, before the Lord, and before the glory of his power:

13 for strong is his right hand that bendeth the bow, his arrows that he shooteth are sharp, and shall not miss, when they begin to be shot into the ends of the world.

14 Behold, the plagues are sent, and shall not return again, until they come upon the earth.

15 The fire is kindled, and shall not be put out, till it consume the foundation of the earth.

16 Like as an arrow which is shot of a mighty archer returneth not backward: even so the plagues that shall be sent upon earth shall not return again.

17 Woe is me! woe is me! who will deliver me in those days?

18 The beginning of sorrows and great mournings; the beginning of famine and great death; the beginning of wars, and the powers shall stand in fear; the beginning of evils! what shall I do when these evils shall come?

12. "The earth quaketh, and the foundations thereof." Compare Ps. xviii. 7. See also Jer. iv. 24.

"The fishes." Ezek. xxxviii. 20, "the fishes of the sea . . . shall shake at my presence." Compare Hos. iv. 3. Zeph. i. 3.

"Before the Lord, and before the glory of his power." Compare Is. ii. 19, 21; and below, ver. 53.

13. "His arrows." Deut. xxxii. 23, 42. Ps. vii. 12; xviii. 14; xlv. 5, "Thine arrows are sharp;" lxiv. 7; cxliv. 6. Ezek. v. 16. Hab. iii.

11. See also Job vi. 4. Ps. xxxviii. 2. Lam. iii. 13.

14, 16. "Shall not return." Compare Is. lv. 11.

15. Compare xv. 23.

17. "Woe is me!" Compare Jer. x. 19; xlv. 3.

18. "The beginning of sorrows." Compare St. Matt. xxiv. 8.

"Famine;" vv. 19, 22, 34, 46; xv. 5, 8.

"And great death." The manuscripts read, "many shall perish."

"The beginning of evils." The English translation, apparently without any reason, omits some words, "and all shall tremble," by which this clause is made to run parallel with the preceding one: "The beginning of wars, and the powers shall stand in fear; the beginning of evils, and all shall tremble."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

19 Behold, famine and plague, tribulation and anguish, are sent as scourges for amendment.

20 But for all these things they shall not turn from their wickedness, nor be alway mindful of the scourges.

21 Behold, victuals shall be so good cheap upon earth, that they shall think themselves to be in good case, and even then shall ² evils grow upon earth, ² or, sword, famine, and great confusion. ^{plagues.}

22 For many of them that dwell upon earth shall perish of famine; and the other, that escape the hunger, shall the sword destroy.

“What shall I do when these evils shall come?” If the beginning of the evils be so terrible, what will their fulness be? Compare St. Luke xxii. 31, “If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?”—words which, like other proverbial sayings, have many applications.

“What shall I do?” The manuscripts read, “What shall they do?”

19. “As scourges for amendment.” Compare 2 Macc. vi. 12—16. Jer. v. 3. Is. xxvi. 9. Hab. i. 12, “O Lord, thou hast ordained them” (the prophet is speaking of the desolating invasion of the Chaldeans) “for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction,” or chastisement. Judith viii. 27, “The Lord doth scourge them that come near unto him, to admonish them.” Compare Heb. xii. 6.

21. “Think themselves to be in good case, and even then shall evils grow.” Compare 1 Thess. v. 3, “When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” The resemblance to St. Paul’s words is closer in the Latin, which has, “think that peace lieth straight before them.”

22—34. This is another vivid description, and we can easily understand how a book containing such passages, though but a fragment by an unknown author, may have been preserved and read by the sad and desolate in the many seasons of calamity which have fallen on the fairest portions of the civilized world. As illustrating the description given of famine, misery, and depopulation, see *Notes* at the beginning of chap. xv., and on xv. 46; and compare *Gibbon*, chap. x.: “Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes (compare xv. 41; xvi. 12.), uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, a crowd of prodigies, fictitious or exaggerated. But a long and general famine (compare xv. 5.) was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year 250 to the year 265, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

23 And the dead shall be cast out as dung, and there shall be no man to comfort them: for the earth shall be wasted, and the cities shall be cast down.

24 There shall be no man left to till the earth, and to sow it.

25 The trees shall give fruit, and who shall gather them?

26 The grapes shall ripen, and who shall tread them? for all places shall be desolate of men:

27 so that one man shall desire to see another, and to hear his voice.

28 For of a city there shall be ten left, and two of the field, which shall hide themselves in the thick groves, and in the clefts of the rocks.

^a Is. 17. 8.

29 ^a As in an orchard of olives upon every tree there are left three or four olives;

30 or as when a vineyard is gathered, there are left some clusters of them that diligently seek through the vineyard:

31 even so in those days there shall be three or four left by them that search their houses with the sword.

32 And the earth shall be laid waste, and the fields thereof shall wax old, and her ways and

"of the Roman Empire. During some time, 5,000 persons died daily "in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated."

23. "The dead shall be cast out as dung." Compare Ps. lxxxiii. 10. Is. v. 25. Jer. viii. 2; ix. 22; xvi. 4; xxv. 33. Zeph. i. 7.

"No man to comfort them." Compare Jer. xvi. 7.

"The earth shall be wasted, and the cities shall be cast down." Compare Jer. iv. 26, 27.

24. "There shall be no man left." Compare Jer. iv. 25.

26. "The grapes shall ripen, and who shall tread them?" On treading the grapes, compare Job xxiv. 11. Is. xvi. 10; lxiii. 2. Jer. xxv. 30; xlviii. 33. Neh. xiii. 15.

29, 30. Compare Is. xvii. 6; xxiv. 13.

32. "The fields thereof shall wax old." "Waxing old," appropriate as ascribed to men prematurely broken down by sorrow (Ps. xxxii. 3. Lam. iii. 4.), is used metaphorically in Ps. cii. 26, to describe the perishing of the earth and the heavens, which "shall wax old as a garment." Here "waxing old" is either used in an indefinite way to convey the notion of desolation and decay, or to intimate that by long disuse of culture the deserted fields had become permanently wild and waste.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

all her paths shall grow full of thorns, because no man shall travel therethrough.

33 The virgins shall mourn, having no bridegrooms; the women shall mourn, having no husbands; their daughters shall mourn, having no helpers.

34 In the wars shall their bridegrooms be destroyed, and their husbands shall perish of famine.

35 Hear now these things, and understand them, ye servants of the Lord.

36 Behold the word of the Lord, receive it: believe not the gods of whom the Lord spake.

37 Behold, the plagues draw nigh, and are not slack.

38 As when a woman with child in the ninth month bringeth forth her son, within two or three hours of her birth great pains compass her womb, which pains, when the child cometh forth, they slack not a moment:

39 even so shall not the plagues be slack to come upon the earth, and the world shall mourn, and sorrows shall come upon it on every side.

40 O my people, hear my word: make you ready to the battle, and in those evils be even as pilgrims upon the earth.

“Her paths shall grow full of thorns.” Compare ver. 77.

“Because no man shall travel therethrough.” See on xv. 60. Compare Is. xxxiii. 8, “The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth.”

33. “Having no bridegrooms.” Compare Ps. lxxviii. 63. Jer. vii. 34. Is. iii. 25; iv. 1. Rev. xviii. 23.

35—78. The Warning to the Servants of the Lord.

36. “The gods of whom the Lord spake.” The reference seems to be to such passages as Exod. xx. 23. Deut. xii. 30. Ps. cxv. 4—9. Is. xlv. 15—20. Compare also “The Epistle of Jeremy,” Bar. vi.

37. “Behold, the plagues draw nigh.” Compare Is. xiii. 22, last clause. See also ver. 52.

38. Compare 1 Thess. v. 3. Is. xiii. 8. Jer. iv. 31.

40. “Make you ready to the battle.” Compare 4 Esdr. vii. 127 (57.). Eph. vi. 13.

“Be even as pilgrims upon the earth.” Compare 1 Pet. ii. 11. Heb. xi. 13. 4 Esdr. viii. 39.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

^b See 1 Cor.
7. 29, 30, 31.

41 ^b He that selleth, let him be as he that fleeth away : and he that buyeth, as one that will lose :

42 he that occupieth merchandise, as he that hath no profit by it : and he that buildeth, as he that shall not dwell therein :

43 he that soweth, as if he should not reap : so also he that planteth the vineyard, as he that shall not gather the grapes :

44 they that marry, as they that shall get no children ; and they that marry not, as the widowers.

45 And therefore they that labour labour in vain :

46 for strangers shall reap their fruits, and spoil their goods, overthrow their houses, and take their children captives, for ²in captivity and famine shall they get children.

² Or, *for*.

47 And they that occupy their merchandise with robbery, the more they deck their cities, their houses, their possessions, and their own persons :

48 the more will I be angry with them for their sin, saith the Lord.

49 Like as a whore envieth a right honest and virtuous woman :

41—44. This passage appears to be imitated from 1 Cor. vii. 29—31.

43. "He that planteth the vineyard." The Latin has, "he that pruneth."

46. Compare Deut. xxviii. 30. Amos v. 11.

48, 49, 50. "Be angry . . . envieth" (rather, "hath indignation against") . . . "hate." The word is the same, and the meaning the same, in all three verses. In xv. 52 (see *Note*) it is rendered, "to proceed against with jealousy." All the various meanings of the word are closely connected together ; zeal for godliness, vehement desire after righteousness, jealousy at beholding base and unworthy objects winning the love due only to that which is good and pure, becomes under another aspect when occasion demands, hatred of sin, and zeal and indignation against iniquity (Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22. Num. xxv. 8—11.). "O ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil" (Ps. xcvi. 10, Prayer-Book version. Rom. xii. 9.).

49. This comparison does not seem in any way to the point. When, however, we read the verse according to the best manuscript, it becomes forcible and apposite : "Like as a right honest and virtuous woman is indignant against a harlot," by gay attire and false allurements, leading men astray, "so shall righteousness hate iniquity when she decketh herself."

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

50 so shall righteousness hate iniquity, when she decketh herself, and shall accuse her to her face, when he cometh that shall defend him that diligently searcheth out every sin upon earth.

51 And therefore be ye not like thereunto, nor to the works thereof.

52 For yet a little, and iniquity shall be taken away out of the earth, and righteousness shall reign among you.

53 Let not the sinner say that he hath not sinned: for God shall burn coals of fire upon his head, which saith before the Lord God and his glory, I have not sinned.

54 Behold, the Lord knoweth all the works of men, ^c their imaginations, their thoughts, and their hearts: ^c Luke 16. 15.

55 which spake but the word, Let the earth be made; ^d and it was made: Let the heaven be made; ^d Gen. 1. 1. and it was created.

56 In his word were the stars made, and he knoweth the ^e number of them. ^e Ps. 147. 4.

57 He searcheth the deep, and the treasures thereof; he hath measured the sea, and what it containeth.

58 He hath shut the sea in the midst of the

51. Compare Eph. v. 7, "Be not ye therefore partakers with them."

52. "For yet a little." See vv. 37—39. Compare Heb. x. 37; and 4 Esdr. xiv. 10—13; and above, ii. 34, 35.

"Iniquity shall be taken away out of the earth, and righteousness shall reign." Compare 4 Esdr. vi. 27, 28; vii. 34.

53. "Let not the sinner say that he hath not sinned." Compare 1 John i. 8, 10. See also ver. 63.

"God shall burn coals of fire upon his head." "Coals of fire," as emblems of God's wrath and punishment (Ps. cxx. 4; cxl. 10. Deut. xxxii. 24. Hab. iii. 5. Rom. xii. 20.).

"Which saith before the Lord and his glory." "His glory." Compare ver. 12.

54. Compare ver. 63; and xv. 26. Ps. xxxiii. 15; xciv. 11; cxxxix. 1—16.

55. Compare Ps. cxlviii. 5. Job xxxviii. 4—6.

56. Compare Ps. xxxiii. 6; cxlvii. 4.

57. Compare Ps. xxxiii. 7. Is. xl. 12.

58. "He hath shut the sea." Job xxxviii. 8—11. Ps. civ. 9. Jer. v. 22.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

waters, and with his word hath he hanged the earth upon the waters.

59 He spreadeth out the heavens like a vault;
f Ps. 24. 2. upon the waters hath he founded it.

60 In the desert hath he made springs of water, and pools upon the tops of the mountains, that the floods might pour down from the high rocks to water the earth.

g Gen. 2. 7. 61 ^g He made man, and put his heart in the midst of the body, and gave him breath, life, and understanding;

62 yea, and the Spirit of Almighty God, which made all things, and searcheth out all hidden things in the secrets of the earth.

63 Surely he knoweth your inventions, and what

"He hanged the earth upon the waters." Compare Ps. xxiv. 2: cxxxvi. 6.

59. "He spreadeth out the heavens like a vault." This is taken from the Greek translation (LXX.) of Is. xl. 22 (compare Ps. civ. 2.). The English Version in both places has "curtain," but the Hebrew words are not the same. It is probable that St. Ambrose may, in one of his letters (XXIX.), be citing this passage in its Latin translation, rather than Is. xl. 22. If this should be the case, it would show that this work (5 Esdras) was known in the fourth century.

"Spreadeth out the heavens." Compare Job ix. 8. Is. xlii. 5; xlv. 24; xlv. 12; li. 13. Jer. x. 12; li. 15.

60. Compare Ps. cvii. 35. Is. xli. 18.

"From the high rocks." Rather, "from on high." "Rocks" is not in the best manuscripts (compare Ps. civ. 13: cxlvii. 8.). The last clause should be read, "that the earth might drink."

62. "Yea" is inserted here by the translators. There should be no stop at the end of ver. 61, as the sentence runs on to the end of ver. 62. The writer says that God gave to man "breath, life, and understanding, and the Spirit of Almighty God who knoweth all things." The gift of His own Spirit to man is a higher gift than the gift of the animal life, or the intellectual powers. Compare 1 Thess. v. 23, "Your whole spirit and soul and body." "The Spirit which He hath given us," 1 John iii. 24.

"Searcheth out all hidden things." Compare ver. 64. 1 Chr. xxviii. 9. Ps. xc. 8. 1 Cor. ii. 10. Rev. ii. 23.

63. "Surely he knoweth your inventions." See ver. 54. In vv. 57—61, for "he" the Latin in each case is "who;" and the sentence runs on from ver. 54 to 63. Then, after this enumeration of the proofs of the wisdom and power of God, the thought of ver. 54 is resumed, and the sentence concluded in the words, "Surely He knoweth your inventions, and what ye think in your hearts." The subject of "knoweth" in ver. 63 is not "the Spirit of Almighty God" in ver. 62, according to an alteration of Junius (xiii. 2.), followed by the translators, but "the Lord" in ver. 54.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

ye think in your hearts, even them that sin, and would hide their sin.

64 Therefore hath the Lord exactly searched out all your works, and he will put you all to shame.

65 And when your sins are brought forth, ye shall be ashamed before men, and your own sins shall be your accusers in that day.

66 What will ye do? or how will ye hide your sins before God and his angels?

67 Behold, God himself is the judge, fear him: leave off from your sins, and forget your iniquities, to meddle no more with them for ever: so shall God lead you forth, and deliver you from all trouble.

68 For, behold, the burning wrath of a great multitude is kindled over you, and they shall take away certain of you, and feed you, ^{2 Or, being unable to resist.} being idle, with things offered unto idols.

69 And they that consent unto them shall be had in derision and in reproach, and trodden under foot.

“Even them that sin.” The manuscripts read, “woe unto them that sin, and would hide their sins.”

“Would hide their sin.” Compare Prov. xxviii. 13, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy.” See ver. 53.

64. “Exactly searched out all your works.” The manuscripts read, “all their works.” Compare ver. 62. Eccclus. xvii. 15, 19, 20.

65. “Your own sins shall be your accusers in that day.” “The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. xx. 12.).

66. “Before God and his angels.” Compare Rev. iii. 5. St. Luke xii. 8, 9. St. Matt. xxv. 31.

68. “Feed you, [being idle,] with things offered unto idols.” Compare 2 Macc. vi. 7, “In the day of the king’s birth every month they were brought by bitter constraint to eat of the sacrifices.” Compare Acts xv. 20, 29. 1 Cor. viii. 10; x. 20, 21. Rev. ii. 14, 20. The translation of this clause is, however, in part conjectural. and “being idle” is a guess of the translators, who, thinking that “slain,” which they found in the Latin was without meaning, made the same alteration as they had made in xv. 60, and for “slain” substituted “being idle,” which they explain in the *Margin*, as “being unable to resist.” Here, however, “slain” is the reading, not only of the printed text, but of the manuscripts.

69. “They that consent unto them shall be had in derision.” In a letter of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, giving an account of the persecutions of the Christians in that city in the year 250 A.D.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

70 For there shall be in every place, and in the next cities, a great insurrection upon those that fear the Lord.

71 They shall be like mad men, sparing none, but still spoiling and destroying those that fear the Lord.

72 For they shall waste and take away their goods, and cast them out of their houses.

73 Then shall they be known, who are my chosen; and they shall be tried as the gold in the fire.

74 Hear, O ye my beloved, saith the Lord: behold, the days of trouble are at hand, but I will deliver you from the same.

75 Be ye not afraid, neither doubt; for God is your guide,

76 and the guide of them who keep my commandments and precepts, saith the Lord God: let not your sins weigh you down, and let not your iniquities lift up themselves.

77 Woe be unto them that are bound with their sins, and covered with their iniquities, like as a field is covered over with bushes, and the path thereof covered with thorns, that no man may travel through!

(see above, on xv. 10.), is a description of certain persons, wealthy, and holding official rank, who being summoned by name consented to do sacrifice. Their pallor and trembling, their visible shame and reluctance, rendered them objects of mockery to the vast crowd standing around, and exhibited them to all as cowards, afraid to die, and afraid to offer sacrifice. The letter is preserved in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, VI. xli. 10.

72. "Waste and take away their goods," &c. Compare Heb. x. 34. See also the notice of the persecution at Alexandria in the *Note* on xv. 10.

73. "Then shall they be known." Compare Mal. iii. 18.

"Tried as the gold in the fire." Ecclus. ii. 5. Wisd. iii. 6. 1 Pet. i. 7; iv. 12.

74, 75. Compare Rev. ii. 10.

75. "Be ye not afraid." Compare Josh. i. 9. Ps. xlv. 1, 2.

"God is your guide." Compare Ps. v. 8; xxiii. 2, 3; xxxi. 3; xliii. 3; xlviii. 14. Is. xlviii. 17; lviii. 11.

77. "That are bound with their sins;" Prov. v. 22.

"Covered with their iniquities, like as a field," &c. Compare Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

"The path thereof covered with thorns;" ver. 32.

II. (IV.) ESDRAS, XVI.

78 It is ²left undressed, and is cast into the fire ²Or,
to be consumed therewith. *shut out.*

The most ancient manuscripts of the Latin add:—

“Here endeth the Fifth Book of Esdras,” or, “of
“Esdras the prophet.”

77, 78. “As a field . . . is cast into the fire.” Compare Heb. vi. 8. As one cannot well speak of a field being cast into the fire, the translation has an awkwardness which is not found in the original; and it would be better to render in some such way as, “it is given
“over to be consumed by fire,” so as to clear off the profitless growth
of thorns and briars.

TOBIT.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Books of Tobit and Judith are placed in the ancient Greek Versions of the Old Testament amongst the Historical Books of the Hebrew Canon, the Book of Judith usually preceding the Canonical Book of Esther. The Christian Church received them, with other Apocryphal treatises, from the Jews of Alexandria. They were probably studied by the Jews as instructive and religious books, and a part of their sacred literature, but it is not certain that they were formally authorised by the Sanhedrim. According to Origen, the Book of Tobit was read by the Jews, either privately or in their synagogues, and regarded by them as a narrative of historical facts. It is certain, however, that the Jews never classed it amongst the Canonical Scriptures, or considered that it had the inspired authority of the twenty-two books of the Hebrew Canon.

The Book of Tobit may be regarded as a narrative based on historical facts, but being written long after the events occurred, it is not a pure history, but rather a moral and didactic treatise based on an old tradition. Thus it partakes largely of the character of the works which were called "apocryphal," or "hidden," because the author either (1.) concealed his name, and assumed the character of another; or (2.) disguised the persons and events which he was describing under fanciful designations; and (3.) was professedly not an accurate historian, but a moral and religious teacher.

Its author was probably a Babylonian Jew, and his materials were the written records or oral traditions of the family to which it relates. But it is doubtful whether any of the Versions which have come down to us can be considered as the original. We have five of these Versions, varying considerably in the details of the story. The most ancient of these is probably the Greek; the nearest to the Greek is the Syriac; then the Latin Vulgate, containing a good deal of matter that is wanting in the Greek and Syriac. This Version was made from an old Chaldee copy which is lost. It is the Version which is the best known, and has exercised the most extensive influence in the Christian Church. Lastly, there are two Hebrew Versions,—that of Munster, and that of Fagius,—differing widely from one another, and from any of the former Versions of the story. These show signs of a later origin, especially in the last

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chapter, where a second destruction of the Temple is predicted, as preceding the final restoration of the glory of the Jewish nation.

The Book of Tobit was highly esteemed by many ancient Christian writers, as exhibiting the duties of charity and patience in the ready help given by Tobit to his brethren in distress, and his resignation under the calamities of exile, poverty, and blindness. It was quoted in the Epistle of Polycarp, and by Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. St. Cyprian made much use of it, especially in his books of *Testimonies*. Of the precepts in the fourth and twelfth chapters, the most celebrated are those relating (1.) to almsgiving, (2.) to the mystery or secret of a king, (3.) to just dealing. The last, "Do that to no man which thou hatest," is often compared with the saying in the Sermon on the Mount (St. Matt. vii. 12.).

The Book of Tobit has been used by the Church to inculcate various moral and religious duties, chiefly the following:—

(1.) Almsgiving. This appears in the Homily "On Almsdeeds," and also in the Offertory Sentences of the Book of Common Prayer.

(2.) Continence in married persons. This appears in the references to Tobit in our Marriage Service. These are mostly based upon the Vulgate, and not on the Greek text of Tobit from which our present English Version is made. This is true also of the Offertory Sentences.

(3.) Pious care for the dead, providing them with decent burial.

(4.) The duty of seeking the Divine blessing and protection before embarking on a journey or sea-voyage. This may be seen in the ancient "Itinerary" offices of devotion. In this aspect of the book, the author may have had in his mind the ninety-first Psalm, the blessing of which is so remarkably illustrated in Tobit and his son: the trust in God in affliction, the Providential deliverance from noonday and midnight demons, the effect of faithful prayer, the angel deputed to keep God's servant in all his ways.

TOBIT, I.

CHAPTER I.

¹ Tobit his stock, and devotion in his youth. ⁹ His marriage, ¹⁰ and captivity. ¹³ His preferment, ¹⁶ alms, and charity in burying the dead; ¹⁹ for which he is accused, and fleeth, ²² and after returneth to Nineve.

² Or, acts.

THE book of the ² words of Tobit, son of Tobiel, the son of Ananiel, the son of Aduel, the son of Gabael, of the seed of Asael, of the tribe of Nephthali;

³ Or, Shalmaneser.

^a 2 Kin. 17.

3, 23.

⁴ Or, Kedesh of Nephthali in

Galilee,

Josh. 20. 7.

Judg. 4. 6.

² who in the time of ³ Enemessar king of the Assyrians ^a was led captive out of Thisbe, which is at the right hand of that city, which is called ⁴ properly Nephthali in Galilee above Aser.

³ I Tobit have walked all the days of my life in the way of truth and justice, and I did many

CHAPTER I.

1. "Tobit." In the Greek text, the father and the son are distinguished as Tobit and Tobias. In the Chaldee Version both bear the same name, "Tobiah," or "Tobijah," "pleasing unto the Lord." The same name occurs in Ezra ii. 60. Neh. ii. 10; vii. 62. Zech. vi. 10, 14. 2 Macc. iii. 11.

"Asael." Called "Jahzeel," or "Jahziel," in Gen. xlii. 24. 1 Chr. vii. 13. Num. xxvi. 48, the firstborn of Naphtali, whose name signifies "God's portion or allotment."

"Of the tribe." The Vulgate has, "of the tribe and city of Nephthali." Tobit may perhaps be said to fulfil the prophecy concerning his tribe (Gen. xlix. 21.), as one "let loose" or released from captivity, and giving goodly words, acceptable to God and man.

2. "Enemessar." This was probably Shalmaneser, as he is called in the Vulgate. He was the Assyrian conqueror of Samaria (2 Kin. xvii.), who removed the ten tribes to the country of the Medes.

"Thisbe." In the Vulgate "Sephet," by a transposition of letters in the Chaldee. It was the town from which the prophet Elijah was named "the Tishbite" (1 Kin. xvii. 1.). Tobijah was like Elijah when he desired death (iii. 6.), through the failing for a while of faith, under deep distress.

"Properly." This is supposed to be a corruption in the Greek of the word "Kadesh," or "Kedesh," the town of Barak, the conqueror of Jabin and Sisera (Judg. iv. 6, 9, 10.).

"Aser." The tribe of Asher, which occupied the sea coast to the West of Naphtali. The Vulgate has, "Naasson," supposed to be a village of Nephthali.

3. "The way;" that is, "manner of life." So the life and teaching of St. John the Baptist is called "the way of righteousness" (St. Matt. xxi. 32.). When the greater part of the ten tribes fell away from the worship of God, there was always a remnant of faithful ones, as in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Chr. xxx. 10, 11, 18.).

TOBIT, I.

almsdeeds to my brethren, and my nation, who came with me to Nineve, into the land of the Assyrians.

4 And when I was in mine own country, in the land of Israel, being but young, ^ball the tribe of Nephthali my father fell from the house of Jerusalem, which was chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, that all the tribes should sacrifice *there*, where the temple of the habitation of the most High was consecrated and built for all ages.

5 Now all the tribes which together revolted, and the house of my father Nephthali, sacrificed ²unto the ^cheifer Baal.

6 But I alone went often to Jerusalem at the feasts, ^das it was ordained unto all the people of Israel by an everlasting decree, ^ehaving the first-fruits and tenths of increase, with that which was first shorn; and them gave I at the altar to the priests the children of Aaron.

7 The first tenth part of all increase I gave to the sons of ³Aaron, who ministered at Jerusalem; ^fanother tenth part I sold away, and went, and spent it every year at Jerusalem:

^b 1 Kin. 12. 19, 20, 28.

² Or, to the power of Baal, or, the god Baal.

^c 1 Kin. 12. 30.

^d Deut. 16. 16.

^e Ex. 22. 29. Deut. 12. 6.

³ Or, Levi, Num. 18. 21. Deut. 14. 25, 26.

“Many almsdeeds.” The Law of God required the Israelites to “strengthen” their brethren when they were in distress (Lev. xxv. 35. Deut. xv. 7, 8.). Almsgiving was also highly commended in the Book of Psalms (Ps. xxxvii. 26; xli. 1; cxii. 5, 9.). Tobit’s purpose was to console his brethren in their captivity and affliction, and to confirm them in their allegiance to the true God in the heathen countries to which they were exiled. In the Vulgate, “every day he gave all that he could get “to his brethren, his fellow captives, that were of his kindred.” There is also added, “When he was younger than any of the tribe of Nephthali, “yet did he no childish thing in his work.”

5. “The heifer Baal.” “To the golden calves which Jeroboam “king of Israel had made” (*Vulgate*). The name of Baal, though it is applied especially to the Phœnician idolatry of Ahab (1 Kin. xvi. 31.), was used to describe in general the false and idolatrous worship to which the Israelites resorted when they forsook the worship of God in Jerusalem. So it is applied to the calves in Hos. xiii. 1, 2.

6. “That which was first shorn.” Perhaps the firstling that was reserved, and not shorn, according to the Law, “Thou shalt not shear “the firstling of thy sheep” (Deut. xv. 19.). Grotius supposed the word to mean a portion of the wool itself, or a fleece reserved for an offering.

7. “Another tenth.” According to Deut. xiv., one of the three tithes was to be eaten before the Lord and shared with the Levites; whilst

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8 and the third I gave unto them to whom it was meet, as Debora my father's mother had commanded me, because I was left an orphan by my father.

9 Furthermore, when I was come to the age of
8 Num. 36. 7. a man, I married Anna of mine ⁸ own kindred, and of her I begat Tobias.

10 And when we were carried away captives to Nineve, all my brethren and those that were of my
h Gen. 43. 32. kindred did eat of the ^h bread of the Gentiles.
Dan. 1. 8.

11 But I kept ² myself from eating ;
2 Gr. my soul.

12 because I remembered God with all my heart.

13 And the most High gave me grace and favour
8 Gr. buyer. before Enemessar, so that I was his ³ purveyor.

14 And I went into Media, and left in trust with

the tithe of the third year was to be given "to whom it was meet," that is, to the poor, "the proselytes and strangers" (*Vulgate*).

8. "As Debora," &c. Regulating his almsgiving by the advice and experience of the aged, and dispensing it with judgment and "consideration" (Ps. xli. 1.). So Timothy profited by the instruction of Lois (2 Tim. i. 5.).

"An orphan." "These and such like things did he observe when "but a boy, according to the Law of God" (*Vulgate*).

9. "Of mine own kindred." Such marriages were preferred, especially as a daughter could not retain her inheritance if she attached herself by marriage to another tribe. See below, iii. 15. Num. xxxvi. 7. Exod. ii. 1.

"Tobias." Probably the same as "Tobit," though distinguished in the Greek. The Vulgate adds, "whom he called after his own name; and "from his infancy he taught him to fear God, and to abstain from all sin."

10. "The bread of the Gentiles." So it was foretold (Ezek. iv. 13. Hos. ix. 3.), that they of Ephraim should "eat unclean things in "Assyria." They had been as heathen in their own land by transgressing God's Law; therefore they should be compelled to be in the condition of heathen in their exile, in the matter of unclean food, which was always a sore trial to their nation. See Dan. i. 8. 2 Macc. vi. 7, 18. Compare also Ps. cxli. 4, "Let me not eat of their dainties."

13. "Purveyor." He was appointed by Shalmanezzer to purchase corn and provisions for his household and retinue: perhaps also superintending the distribution of it. In the Vulgate: "He gave him leave "to go whithersoever he would, with liberty to do whatever he had "a mind." Thus Tobit seems to have acquired some wealth, of which he was afterwards forcibly deprived (ver. 20, below). Origen compared this to the promotion of Mordecai (Esth. viii. 1, 2.), and of Nehemiah, who was the king's cupbearer, as showing how the Jews prospered and became wealthy in their exile. Large sums would be put into his hands from time to time, to buy in the markets or elsewhere for the king's table. His nephew Achiacharus was similarly promoted. See ver. 22.

14. "I went into Media." Probably accompanying the king as one

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Gabael, the brother of Gabrias, ² at Rages a city of Media ten talents of silver.

15 Now when Enemessar was dead, Sennacherib his son reigned in his stead; ³ whose estate was troubled, that I could not go into Media.

16 And in the time of Enemessar I gave many alms to my brethren, ¹ and gave my bread to the hungry,

17 and my clothes to the naked: and if I saw any of my nation dead, or cast ⁴ about the walls of Nineve, ^k I buried him.

18 And if the king Sennacherib had slain any, when he was come, and ¹ fled from Judea, I buried

² Or, in the land, or, country of Media.

³ Gr. the ways of whom were unsettled.

¹ See Job 31. 17, 19, 20.

⁴ Or, behind the walls.

^k 2 Esdr. 2. 23.

¹ 2 Kin. 19. 35, 36.

Is. 37. 36, 37.

Ecclus. 48. 18, 21.

1 Macc. 7. 41.

2 Macc. 8. 19.

of his retinue when he resorted to his summer palace at Rages or Achmetha (Ezra vi. 2.). Rages is called "Ragau," in Judith i. 5, 15. The Vulgate adds, "He went to all that were in captivity, and gave them wholesome admonitions."

"Ten talents of silver." About £3,500. The Vulgate adds, that it was "a sum with which he had been honoured by the king." It was a present and token of respect for services done to him. Tobit lent or advanced it to Gabael, "who was in want, being one of his tribe; taking a note of his hand, he gave him the aforesaid sum of money."

15. "Sennacherib his son." He was his relative and successor, though perhaps not actually his son. The Assyrian records, according to Rawlinson, represent Sennacherib as the son of Sargon.

"Whose estate was troubled." The Greek means either that his reign was an unsettled one, or that his "ways," or manner of government, were changed for the worse. "He had a hatred for the children of Israel" (*Vulgate*).

16. "To the hungry." In the time of his prosperity he lived in the fear of God, and used his abundance for the relief of the destitute, that it might not become a snare to him, or lead him to forget God (Deut. vi. 11, 12.). So Job trembled in the midst of his prosperity, and was ever prepared for a reverse; and this fear, and not a mere feeling of benevolence, made him kind to the destitute (Job xxxi. 17—20.). Works of mercy were amongst the chief marks of distinction of the righteous from the ungodly (Ezek. xviii. 5, 7, 9.); and these were the duties which the prophets exhorted God's people to practise on their fasting days (Is. lviii. 7.).

17. "Buried him." The burying of the neglected dead has always been regarded by Christians as an act of piety and charity, and is usually reckoned among the seven corporal works of mercy. The same appears in the practice of the Jews, both in ancient times, as expressed in Ecclus. xxxviii. 16, 17, and to this day, when, even in the case of the wealthy, much is done by the friends and relatives of the deceased with their own hands. See Gen. i. 1, 2.

18. "The king Sennacherib." In the Vulgate: "When the king

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them privily; for in his wrath he killed many; but the bodies were not found, when they were sought for of the king.

19 And when one of the Ninevites went and complained of me to the king, that I buried them, and hid myself; understanding that I was sought for to be put to death, I withdrew myself for fear.

20 Then all my goods were forcibly taken away, neither was there any thing left me, beside my wife Anna and my son Tobias.

21 And there passed not five and fifty days, before two of his sons ^m killed him, and they fled into the mountains of Ararath; and ² Sarchedonus his son reigned in his stead; who appointed over his father's accounts, and over all his affairs, Achiacharus my brother Anael's son.

^m 2 Kin. 19.
37.
² Chr. 32. 21.
² Or, *Esar-*
haddon.

22 And Achiacharus intreating for me, I returned to Nineve. Now Achiacharus was cupbearer, and keeper of the signet, and steward, and overseer of

"Sennacherib was come back, fleeing from Judea, by reason of the slaughter that God had made about him for his blasphemy, and being angry slew many of the children of Israel, Tobias buried them."

20. "Taken away." Having already parted with so much for the relief of the poor, and with the large sum advanced to Gabael, he is now stripped of the rest. So the Hebrew Christians were impoverished (Heb. x. 34.). All that remained now to him was his wife Anna and son Tobias, whose names, signifying "grace" and "the goodness of the Lord," were tokens of help and comfort from above. The Vulgate adds, "He fled away naked with his son and his wife, and lay concealed, for many loved him." His concealment was for fifteen days, according to one version of the story, and his deliverance was granted to the prayers of the widows and orphans who had partaken of his bounty.

21. "Two of his sons;" as in 2 Kin. xix. 37. The Hebrew version of the story says that Sennacherib first threatened to kill his sons, his wise men having informed him that the zeal of God for Israel was in consequence of Abraham's slaying his son at the Divine command.

"Sarchedonus." The same name as "Esarhaddon," the first syllable of the latter being omitted.

"Achiacharus." Called in one of the Hebrew Versions, "Aaron, the son of Hananeel." One Version says, "the king in his wrath had commanded him also to be arrested."

22. "I returned to Nineve." The Vulgate adds, "all his substance was returned to him."

"Keeper of the signet." He had charge of the signet-ring worn on the king's finger. From earliest times power was given and delegated by entrusting to another the ring, with a seal or signet forming part of it (Gen. xxxviii. 18; xli. 42. Esth. viii. 2. Jer. xxii. 24.). In the

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the accounts : and ² Sarchedonus appointed him next ² Or, Esar-haddon.
unto him : and he was my brother's son.

CHAPTER II.

¹ Tobit leaveth his meat to bury the dead, ¹⁰ and becometh blind. ¹¹ His wife taketh in work to get her living. ¹⁴ Her husband and she fall out about a kid.

NOW when I was come home again, and my wife Anna was restored unto me, with my son Tobias, in the feast of Pentecost, which is ^a the holy feast of the seven weeks, there was a good dinner prepared me, in the which I sat down to eat. ^a Ex. 34. 22. Deut. 16. 10, 11.

² And when I saw abundance of meat, I said to my son, Go and bring what poor man soever thou shalt find out of our brethren, who is mindful of the Lord ; and, lo, I tarry for thee.

³ But he came again, and said, Father, one of our nation is strangled, and is cast out in the marketplace.

⁴ Then before I had tasted of any meat, I started up, and took him up into a room until the going down of the sun.

⁵ Then I returned, and washed myself, and ate my meat in heaviness,

⁶ remembering that prophecy of ^b Amos, as he ^b Amos 8. 8, 10.

New Testament it is a type of the gift of the Spirit (St. Luke xv. 22. Eph. i. 13 ; iv. 30.).

CHAPTER II.

1. "A good dinner." A more ample provision was made, as for a festival, or a "good day" (1 Sam. xxv. 8. Neh. viii. 10.).

2. "Go and bring in," &c. This charitable act of Tobit is in accordance with the spirit of the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Passover was a domestic feast of each family. The two latter feasts were both hospitable and charitable. See Deut. xvi. 11, 14. Neh. viii. 10, 12 ; and compare the precept of the Gospel, to entertain those who can make no recompence (St. Luke xiv. 12—14.). See also Job xxxi. 17.

"Who is mindful of the Lord." Especially in the observance of His solemn feasts.

4. "Until the going down of the sun." Until after the feast day was passed, that the holy joy of the festival might not be interrupted, and also to escape observation by doing the act of burial under cover of night.

6. "That prophecy of Amos." The words are found in Amos viii. 10. The circumstances were also a remarkable fulfilment of Amos viii. 3,

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^{c1} Macc. 1. 39. said, ^c Your feasts shall be turned into mourning, and all your mirth into lamentation.

7 Therefore I wept: and after the going down of the sun I went and made a grave, and buried him.

8 But my neighbours mocked me, and said, This man is not yet afraid to be put to death for this matter: ^d who fled away; and yet, lo, he burieth the dead again.

^e Num. 19. 11. 9 The same night also I returned from the burial, and slept by the wall of my courtyard, ^e being polluted, and my face was uncovered:

² Or, swallows. 10 and I knew not that there were ² sparrows in the wall, and mine eyes being open, the sparrows muted warm dung into mine eyes, and ³ a whiteness came in mine eyes; and I went to the physicians, but they helped me not: moreover Achiacharus did nourish me, until I went into Elymais.

“The songs of the Temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord
“God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast
“them forth with silence.”

9. “The same night.” The night after the day of Pentecost. But the Vulgate adds, “Tobias, fearing God more than the king, carried off the bodies of them that were slain, and hid them in his house, and at midnight buried them. Now it happened one day, that being wearied with burying, he came to his house.”

“Being polluted.” He was unclean by reason of touching a dead body, and this made it unlawful for him to enter his own house (Num. xix. 11—22.). A seven days’ purification, and the sprinkling of the water of separation, and other washings, were required before this uncleanness could be purged. Tobit remained in the open air, that others might contract no pollution through him. In the Hebrew Version Tobit says, “I could not purify myself in an unclean land, as in the land of Israel.”

10. “Sparrows.” The Vulgate describes it as “hot dung out of a swallow’s nest” which blinded him. The word is used for any kind of small bird. After relating that he became blind, the Vulgate adds: “Now this trial the Lord therefore permitted to happen to him, that an example might be given to posterity of his patience, as also of holy Job. For as he had always feared God from his infancy, and kept His commandments, he repined not against God because the evil of blindness had befallen him, but continued immovable in the fear of God, giving thanks to God all the days of his life. For as the kings insulted over holy Job, so his relations and kinsmen mocked at his life, saying, “Where is thy hope, for which thou gavest alms and buriedst the dead? “But Tobias rebuked them, saying, Speak not so; for we are the children of saints, and look for that life which God will give to those that “never change their faith from Him.”

TOBIT, II.

11 And my wife Anna ²did take women's works ²Or, *was hired to spin in the women's rooms.*
to do.

12 And when she had sent ³them home to the owners, they paid her wages, and gave her also ³Or, *her work.*
besides a kid.

13 And when it was in my house, and began to cry, I said unto her, From whence is this kid? is it not stolen? render it to the owners; 'for it is [†]Deut. 22. 1.
not lawful to eat any thing that is stolen.

14 But she replied upon me, It was given for a gift more than the wages. Howbeit I did not believe her, but bade her render it to the owners: and I was abashed at her. [§]But she replied upon [§]Job 2. 9.
me, Where are thine alms and thy righteous deeds? ⁴Or, *lo, all things are known to thee.*
⁴behold, thou and all thy works are known.

"Until I went." It is conjectured that the reading should be "until he went;" for Tobit remained in Nineveh, as we learn from chaps. xi. and xiii.

"Elymais." The land of the Elymæans (Judith i. 6.); probably "Elam," or "Persia," the country to the South of Media.

11. "Did take women's works." Or, she was hired to do spinning or weaving work in the house of the women, entering the service of some wealthy Ninevite. This would be after the departure of Achiarus, upon whom they had hitherto depended for their maintenance.

12. "A kid." A present in addition to her hire as a weaver, perhaps in recognition of the superior excellence of her work. So Tobit charged his son to pay the wages of Raphael, and to "give him more" (xii. 1.).

13. "Began to cry." Being blind he could not see it, but he heard it bleating (*Vulgate*), and his suspicions were aroused.

14. "I did not believe her." He feared or suspected that her deep poverty might have led her to seek unlawful means of subsistence. Such a fear was a sign of a tender and scrupulous conscience, like that of Job, who sought to provide against the possibility of his sons committing sin in secret against God (Job i. 5.). On the other hand his suspicion of his wife's integrity seems to have been unjust, and might be taken as illustrating the low and servile position assigned to women among the Jews.

"Where are thine alms?" that is, To what profit are thine alms? They seemed to have brought him nothing but blindness, misery, and poverty. Thus Job's wife upbraided him, speaking as "one of the foolish women" (Job ii. 9.). The *Vulgate* has: "It is evident thy hope is now come to nothing, and thine alms now appear. And with these and other such like words she upbraided him."

"Thou and all thy works are known." Literally, "thy works are manifest with thee." His poverty, blindness, and other misfortunes, were the only apparent results of his good works.

TOBIT, III.

CHAPTER III.

1 *Tobit, grieved with his wife's taunts, prayeth.* 11 *Sara, reproached by her father's maids, prayeth also.* 17 *An angel is sent to help them both.*

THEN I being grieved did weep, and in my sorrow prayed, saying,

2 O Lord, thou art just, and all thy works and all thy ways are mercy and truth, and thou judgest truly and justly for ever.

3 Remember me, and look on me, punish me not for my sins and ignorances, and *the sins of my fathers*, who have sinned before thee :

^a Deut. 28.
15, 37.

4 for they obeyed not thy commandments : wherefore thou hast delivered us ^a for a spoil, and unto captivity, and unto death, and for a proverb of reproach to all the nations among whom we are dispersed.

5 And now thy judgments are many and true : deal with me according to my sins and my fathers' : because we have not kept thy commandments, neither have walked in truth before thee.

6 Now therefore deal with me as seemeth best unto thee, and command my spirit to be taken

CHAPTER III.

1. "I being grieved." Weighed down by bodily pain and infirmity, as well as by sorrow of heart (*Hebrew*.) Tobit seems to have withdrawn from his house (ver. 17, below), to be alone with God in some place of retirement. See St. Luke ix. 18. Upon this passage St. Augustine says : "The prayer of the just man is the key of heaven. When prayer ascends, the mercy of God descends. Though heaven is high and the earth is low, yet God hears the speech of man, if he has a pure heart. The language of the senses, groans, and tears, are even more effectual with Him than words."

2. "All thy ways are mercy and truth." These words are taken from Ps. xxv. 10. Compare Ps. lxxxvi. 15 ; xcvi. 3.

3. "Ignorances." The Greek word strictly means "sins of ignorance," but it is used generally for transgressions of God's law, or "trespasses," as well as "errors" or "oversights" (1 Macc. xiii. 39. Judith v. 20.).

5. "Deal with me." Another reading is, "to deal with me." Otherwise it would seem to be a contradiction of the prayer in ver. 3, "punish me not." Thou mightest justly deal with me according to my sins, yet deal with me according to Thy mercy. Or, "Thou hast dealt with me according to my iniquities, in depriving me of sight" (*Hebrew*).

6. "As seemeth best to thee." Let me die, if it be Thy will that I should now undergo the common sentence of mortality, which Thou hast passed upon all men. So Job said, "Wherefore is light given to him

TOBIT, III.

from me, that I may be ²dissolved, and become earth: ^bfor it is profitable for me to die rather than to live, because I have heard false reproaches, and have much sorrow: command therefore that I may now be delivered out of this distress, and go into the everlasting place: turn not thy face away from me.

² Or, *dismissed, or, delivered.*
^b Jonah 4. 3.

7 It came to pass the same day, that in Ecbatane a city of Media Sara the daughter of Raguel was also reproached by her father's maids;

8 because that she had been married to seven husbands, whom Asmodeus the evil spirit had kill-

"that is in misery, and life unto the bitter of soul; which long for death, "but it cometh not?" (Job iii. 20, 21.).

"Command my spirit to be taken from me." Life itself was become a burden to him, when all that made life desirable seemed to be taken from him. So Moses prayed in his despondency (Num. xi. 14, 15.). Jonah and Elijah made a similar request (Jonah iv. 2, 3. 1 Kin. xix. 4.).

"Dissolved," . . . "delivered." In the Greek it is "dismissed" in both places, the word used by Simeon of his departure or release, in St. Luke ii. 29. Hades is here called "the everlasting place," as in Eccles. xii. 5, "man goeth to his long home," or "the house of his age," that is, "the world to come." "Gather me to my fathers, to the house appointed for all living" (*Hebrew*), as in Job xxx. 23; x. 21.

7. "In Ecbatane." The Vulgate has, "in Rages," as in i. 14. Grotius supposed that here, and in 2 Macc. ix. 3, the province rather than the city of Ecbatane is intended. Ecbatane is probably the same as Achmetha in Ezra vi. 1, 2. See on Judith i. 1, 2.

"Reproached." In the Hebrew Version, she is reproached by some of her father's kindred, who say, "Thou art not meet to be called Sarah, "but Zarah;" not a "princess" (Sarah), but an "adversary" or "rival" (Zarah), 1 Sam. i. 6.

8. "Asmodeus the evil spirit." In the Talmud the prince of the demons is called "Ashmodai," from a Syriac word meaning "to destroy." He is described as one of the evil angels, or "spirits created for vengeance" (Ecclus. xxxix. 28.). The Hebrew Version has, "Satan, whom they call Ashmodai." According to the Vulgate, in vi. 17, he is the demon who has "power over those who give themselves to their lust, "as brute beasts which have no understanding." "Sammael" is another name applied in the Rabbinical writings to the chief of the demons.

It is to be observed, that the piety and devotion of Sara excited the special enmity of evil spirits against her. The evil spirits are sometimes permitted to inflict death as well as disease. See Job ii. 6. It may also be observed, that the story bears some resemblance to the fate of Er and Onan, the sons of Judah (1 Chr. ii. 3.), especially as related in the *Testaments of the Patriarchs*: "the angel of the Lord slew Er the "third night after his marriage, when he had not yet companied with "Tamar by reason of his mother's jealousy."

ed, before they had lain with her. Dost thou not know, said they, that thou hast strangled thine husbands? thou hast had already seven husbands, neither wast thou named after any of them.

9 Wherefore dost thou beat us for them? if they be dead, go thy ways after them, let us never see of thee either son or daughter.

10 When she heard these things, she was very sorrowful, so that she thought to have strangled herself; and she said, I am the only daughter of my father, and if I do this, it shall be a reproach unto him, and I shall bring his old age with sorrow unto the grave.

11 Then she prayed toward the window, and said, Blessed art thou, O Lord my God, and thine holy

"Dost thou not know," &c. In the Vulgate, "When she reproved the maid for her fault, she answered her, saying, May we never see son or daughter of thee upon earth, thou murderer of thy husbands. Wilt thou kill me also, as thou hast also killed seven husbands?"

10. "Strangled herself." Some explain the word to mean that she was "ready to die of grief," or to be choked with anguish of spirit. It is used of Judas in St. Matt. xxvii. 5, and Ahithophel in 2 Sam. xvii. 23.

"I shall bring," &c. This is a beautiful and touching expression of domestic sorrow, used first by the aged Jacob (Gen. xlii. 38; xliv. 31.).

11. "Then she prayed." In the Vulgate, "At these words she went into an upper chamber of her house, and for three days and three nights did neither eat nor drink." So it was an upper chamber into which Daniel entered, to pray with his windows open towards Jerusalem (Dan. vi. 10.). Judith prayed on her housetop, in a chamber or tent constructed there (Judith viii. 5.). The Jews called their wise men "sons of the upper chamber." See also Acts i. 13; ix. 37. In these upper rooms, which were used as oratories, the "window" was regarded as of special importance. The Jews had a canon, "Let no man pray but in such a room, which hath windows or holes in the wall opening towards the Holy City." So here, instead of "toward the window," the Hebrew has, "before the Lord," that is, "towards His sanctuary at Jerusalem," where the Shechina sate. This is the "window" referred to in Jer. xxii. 14; the "large chamber" being the upper chamber or oratory of the house, with the window opening towards the sanctuary. An ancient poet called these holes the "ears of heaven" (*Gregorie*). At this window Sara puts away from her the thought of self-destruction, by the healing and hopeful power of prayer.

"Blessed art thou." She begins her prayer with thanksgiving, though in such profound distress. Thus she shows her entire resignation and trust in God.

TOBIT, III.

and glorious name is blessed and honourable for ever: let all thy works praise thee for ever.

12 And now, O Lord, I set mine eyes and my face toward thee,

13 and say, Take me out of the earth, that I may hear no more the reproach.

14 Thou knowest, Lord, that I am pure from all sin with man,

15 and that I never polluted my name, nor the name of my father, in the land of my captivity: I am the only daughter of my father, neither hath he any child to be his heir, neither any near ²kins- ²Or, brother. man, nor any son of his alive, to whom I may keep myself for a wife: my seven husbands are already dead; and why should I live? but if it please not thee that I should die, command some regard to be had of me, and pity taken of me, that I hear no more reproach.

16 So the prayers of them both were heard before the majesty of the great God.

17 And Raphael was sent to heal them both, that

13. "Take me out of the earth." In the Vulgate, "I beg that 'Thou loose me from the bond of this reproach, or else take me away 'from the earth.'"

14, 15. Sara here protests her innocence and her chastity. This is expanded to some length in the Vulgate, where she disclaims all lust and levity; she had not made herself partaker with them that play; she had consented to take a husband, not for her own caprice, but at the desire of her parents; and she adds, "either I was unworthy of 'them, or they perhaps were not worthy of me; because perhaps Thou 'hast kept me for another man. For Thy counsel is not in man's 'power. But this every one is sure of that worshippeth Thee, that 'his life, if it be under trial, shall be crowned; and if it be under 'tribulation, it shall be delivered; and if it be under correction, it 'shall be allowed to come to Thy mercy. For Thou art not delighted 'in our being lost; because after a storm Thou makest a calm, and 'after tears and weeping Thou pourest in Thy joyfulness." In the Hebrew, she says, "Are not the secrets of all hearts manifest before 'Thee? Therefore Thou knowest my innocence."

16. "Of them both;" i.e. the petition of Tobit and that of Sara, "whose prayers were rehearsed at one time in the sight of the Lord" (*Vulgate*). "The one prayed on account of his blindness, and the 'other on account of the reproach of her parents" (*Hebrew*). See Rev. viii. 3. Tobit xii. 15.

17. "Raphael." The angel who "is the prince of healing" (*Hebrew*), or whose name declares that it is "God that healeth," as in Exod. xv.

TOBIT, IV.

is, to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes, and to give Sara the daughter of Raguel for a wife to Tobias the son of Tobit; and to bind Asmodeus the evil spirit; ^c because she belonged to Tobias by right of inheritance. The selfsame time came Tobit home, and entered into his house, and Sara the daughter of Raguel came down from her upper chamber.

CHAPTER IV.

3 Tobit giveth instructions to his son Tobias, 20 and telleth him of money left with Gabael in Media.

^a ch. 1. 14. **I**N that day Tobit remembered ^a the money which he had committed to Gabael in Rages of Media, 2 and said with himself, I have wished for death; wherefore do I not call for my son Tobias, that I may signify to him *of the money* before I die?

3 And when he had called him, he said, My son, ^b Prov. 23. 22. when I am dead, bury me; and ^b despise not thy

26. In xii. 15, Raphael is said to be "one of the seven holy angels, who present the prayers of the saints," or "one of the chief princes," as Michael is called in Dan. x. 13. Some old writers inferred from the Book of Tobit, that Raphael was the angel who had especial charge to watch over the sick, and over travellers. He is here sent to convey a threefold blessing in answer to the prayers of Tobit and Sara: (1.) recovery of sight, (2.) honourable marriage, (3.) restraining the power of the evil spirit.

"To bind Asmodeus." As in viii. 3. One of the Hebrew editions has, "to rebuke Satan, and to command him to depart," as in Zech. iii. 2.

"By right." Since she was an only daughter and heiress, the nearest kinsman could claim her and her inheritance, according to the Law, in Deut. xxv. 5, 6, and Num. xxxvi. 6.

CHAPTER IV.

1. "The money." The ten talents of silver, which he had lent to his friend Gabael (i. 14.).

2. "Wished for death." He had prayed for death, and "he thought" that his prayer was heard (*Vulgate*).

3. "My son," &c. This address of Tobit to his son is full of spiritual counsel and godly wisdom. It contains twelve godly admonitions. The first, in vv. 3, 4, speaks of filial duty to parents; the second, in vv. 5, 6, of religion and the fear of God; the third, in vv. 7—11, of almsgiving; the fourth, in ver. 12, of chastity, and the avoiding of fornication; the fifth, in ver. 13, of humility; the sixth, in ver. 14, of just dealing and the payment of dues; the seventh, in vv. 15, 16, of justice, temperance, and mercy; the eighth, in ver. 17, of care for the dead; the ninth, in

TOBIT, IV.

mother, ^c but honour her all the days of thy life, and do that which shall please her, and grieve her not. ^c Ex. 20. 12.
Ecclus. 7.
27.

4 Remember, my son, that she saw many dangers for thee, *when thou wast* in her womb; and when she is dead, bury her by me in one grave.

5 My son, be mindful of the Lord our God all thy days, and let not thy will be set to sin, or to transgress his commandments: do uprightly all thy life long, and follow not the ways of unrighteousness.

6 For if thou deal truly, thy doings shall prosperously succeed to thee, and to all them that live justly.

7 ^d Give alms of thy substance; and when thou givest alms, let not thine eye be envious, neither turn thy face from any poor, and the face of God shall not be turned away from thee. ^d Deut. 15.
7, 8.
Prov. 3. 9.
Ecclus. 4. 1,
4, 5.
& 14. 13.
ver. 16.
Luke 11. 41.
& 14. 13.

ver. 18, of prudence and seeking counsel; the tenth, in ver. 19, of thankfulness to God; the eleventh, in ver. 20, of discretion in worldly affairs; and the twelfth, in ver. 21, of trust in God in poverty and affliction. The whole address is commended to our attention by two quotations from it in the Offertory Sentences of our Communion Service.

“Honour her.” The duty enjoined in the Decalogue, including support and maintenance, “not forsaking” a parent in old age or infirmity. See Ecclus. iii. 3—8; vii. 27, 28.

4. “Bury her.” The last filial duty, performed by Isaac and Ishmael, in Gen. xxv. 9; by Esau and Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 29; by the twelve patriarchs, in Gen. l. 7, 8. The Vulgate has, in ver. 3, “When God shall take my soul, thou shalt bury my body.”

“In one grave.” So Abraham was laid with Sarah, Isaac with Rebekah, Jacob with Leah (Gen. xlix. 31.). The Hebrew has, “Thou shalt bury her by me honourably.”

5. “Be mindful of the Lord.” Forget not His benefits, nor His law, nor the service that is due to Him. So Moses was continually warning Israel not to forget the Lord their God (Deut. vi. 12; viii. 11, 14, 18, 19.). “Remember now thy Creator” (Eccles. xii. 1.).

6. “That live justly.” In the Greek, “do righteousness,” which often signifies “give alms.” Thus, the three things which are “required of man” are, “to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God” (Micah vi. 8.). These are the “weightier matters” (St. Matt. xxiii. 23.).

7. “Let not thine eye be envious.” A grudging spirit to man shows an unthankful spirit to God. There is no envy in Him; He bestows His benefits with an unsparing hand. If we give grudgingly, or withhold our gifts, we disparage His bounty and are ungrateful for it. See also Ecclus. xiv. 8—13.

- Ecclus. 35. 10. 8 If thou hast abundance, *give alms accordingly : if thou have but a little, be not afraid to give according to that little :
- † 1 Tim. 6. 19. 9 for thou †layest up a good treasure for thyself against the day of necessity.
- ‡ Ecclus. 29. 12, 13. 10 ‡Because that alms do deliver from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness.
- 11 For alms is a good gift unto all that give it in the sight of the most High.

“Shall not be turned away.” So it is said in the Psalms, concerning the “righteous” who shows mercy to the poor, “I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth ; and his seed is blessed” (Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26.). The Hebrew edition has, “Turn not thine eyes from the poor of Israel.”

8. “If thou hast abundance.” The Vulgate here adds, “According to thy ability be merciful.” So in St. Luke xxi. 3, 4, our Lord praised the two mites of the widow more than the gifts of the rich, who cast in of their abundance. The offering is accepted if it is “according to that a man hath” (2 Cor. viii. 12.), or “as God hath prospered” the giver (1 Cor. xvi. 2.).

“According to that little.” “Cease not to give alms of that which is found in thine hands” (*Hebrew*).

9. “Against the day of necessity.” So St. Paul calls it a “good foundation against the time to come” (1 Tim. vi. 19.). Our Lord teaches us thus to provide for the time when our earthly stewardship shall cease, that “when we fail, we may be received into everlasting habitations” (St. Luke xvi. 9.).

10. “Alms do deliver from death.” The same words are found in xii. 9. In xiv. 11 the expression is, “Consider what alms doeth, and how righteousness doth deliver.” So in Prov. xi. 4, “righteousness” is said to “deliver from death.” The righteous man in Scripture often means one who is merciful and benevolent ; for to show mercy is to deal justly, to do to others as we should wish them to do to us, if we were in like case. Hence, “righteousness” often signifies “almsgiving,” as in Ps. cxii. 9. 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10 ; for alms are the “fruits of righteousness.” By almsgiving we sow to ourselves in righteousness (Hos. x. 12.). In St. Matt. vi. 1, to “do alms” is, in the Greek, to “do righteousness.” The righteousness of almsgiving is acceptable to God, Who will reward it openly (St. Matt. vi. 4.) ; and though it will not atone for the transgression of other precepts of God’s law, yet it will be one of the marks of God’s elect, who shall be set on the right hand of the Judge at the last day. Our Lord teaches, in St. Matt. xxv. 45, that the neglect of these works of mercy will cause many to “come into darkness.” So the Hebrew here has, “it delivereth from the judgment of hell,” and refers to the words of the Psalm, “I will behold Thy presence in righteousness,” as if it was the same as “giving in the sight of the Most High.” This verse is quoted twice in the Homilies on “Almsgiving.”

TOBIT, IV.

12 Beware of all ^h whoredom, my son, and chiefly take a wife of the seed of thy fathers, and take not a strange woman to wife, which is not of thy father's tribe: for we are the children of the prophets, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: remember, my son, that our fathers from the beginning, even that they all married wives of their own kindred, and were blessed in their children, and their seed shall inherit the land. ^h 1 Thess. 4. 3.

13 Now therefore, my son, love thy brethren, and despise not in thy heart thy brethren, the sons and daughters of thy people, in *not* taking a wife of them: for in pride is destruction and much trouble, and in lewdness is decay and great want: for lewdness is the mother of famine.

14 Let not the ⁱ wages of any man, which hath wrought for thee, tarry with thee, but give him it out of hand: for if thou serve God, he will also repay thee: ^k be circumspect, my son, in all things thou doest, and be wise in all thy conversation. ⁱ Lev. 19. 13.
Deut. 24. 14, 15.
^k Ex. 23. 13.
Ephes. 5. 15.

15 ^l Do that to no man which thou hatest: drink ^l Matt. 7. 12.
Luke 6. 31.

12. "Beware of all whoredom." The sin of fornication, which was common among the heathen. In the Vulgate, "Beside thy wife, never endure to know a crime;" the sin for which the Jews are sternly reprov'd in Mal. ii. 14, 15.

"Of their own kindred." See Gen. xxvii. 46.

"Their seed shall inherit the land." This expresses the hope of restoration to their own land, in fulfilment of the sayings of the prophets.

13. "Lewdness." In the Greek, "unprofitableness;" that is, idleness and sloth, the sense in which the word is used in St. Luke xvii. 10. See Prov. xiii. 4.

"Pride is destruction." In the Vulgate, "from it all perdition took its beginning;" as in Prov. xvi. 18, "Pride goeth before destruction." See also Prov. xviii. 12.

14. "Out of hand." Without delay; immediately. According to the Law, payment was not to be delayed until the morrow (Lev. xix. 13.).

"Circumspect." Literally, "Take heed unto thyself," as in Dent. xii. 13, 19, and elsewhere.

"Wise." Literally, "disciplined, or chastened."

15. "Do that to no man which thou hatest." This is the law of justice, "to love thy neighbour as thyself, and to do to men whatsoever we would they should do to us," by which all wrong-doing, even in revenge or retaliation, is excluded; for "love worketh no ill to his neighbour" (Rom. xiii. 10.). But the rule of the Gospel (St. Matt. vii. 12.) goes beyond this, teaching us not only to abstain from wrong, but to do good.

TOBIT, IV.

not wine to make thee drunken : neither let drunkenness go with thee in thy journey.

^m ch. 1. 16, 17. ^{17.} Luke 14. 13. 16 ^m Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked ; and according to thine abundance ⁿ give alms ; and ^o let not thine eye be envious, when thou givest alms.

ⁿ ver. 8.
^o ver. 7.

17 Pour out thy bread on the burial of the just, but give nothing to the wicked.

18 Ask counsel of all that are wise, and despise not any counsel that is profitable.

19 Bless the Lord thy God alway, and desire of him that thy ways may be directed, and that all thy paths and counsels may prosper : for every nation hath not counsel ; ^p but the Lord himself giveth all good things, and he humbleth whom he will, as he will ; now therefore, my son, remember my commandments, neither let them be put out of thy mind.

^p James 1. 17.

20 And now I signify this to thee, that I committed ten talents to Gabael ^q the son of Gabrias at Rages in Media.

^q ch. 1. 14,
the brother.

21 And fear not, my son, that we are made poor : ^r for thou hast much wealth, if thou fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is pleasing in his sight.

“Go with thee.” Perhaps this is to exhort him to avoid the society of drunkards, as well as intemperance itself.

16, 17. Instead of sharing his bread or wine with the wicked or sensual, he is to share it with the poor, or with the mourners at the burial of a good man, that they may be comforted in their bereavement. On the “cup of consolation,” see Jer. xvi. 7.

18. “Ask counsel.” He is not to “lean to his own understanding,” but to prefer to be guided by the advice of others (Prov. iii. 5.). Hence, those who are troubled with scruples of conscience may learn to seek the aid of a spiritual guide (*Jer. Taylor*).

19. “Every nation hath not counsel.” There is no counsel against the Lord, or in opposition to His will, for He bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought (Ps. xxxiii. 10, 11. Is. viii. 10.).

“My son, remember my commandments.” The Hebrew adds, from Prov. iii. 3, “Bind them about thy neck, write them upon the table of thine heart.”

20. “In Media.” The Vulgate adds (as in i. 17.), “and I have a note of his hand with me.”

21. “Thou hast much wealth.” The Lord Himself, “Who giveth all good things,” ver. 19, would either give him power to get wealth, or He would enrich him with His favour and blessing, which is of greater price than earthly possessions. “A little that the righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked” (Ps. xxxvii. 16. Prov. xv. 16.).

TOBIT, V.

CHAPTER V.

4 *Young Tobias seeketh a guide into Media.* 6 *The angel will go with him,* 12 *and saith he is his kinsman.* 16 *Tobias and the angel depart together.* 17 *But his mother is grieved for her son's departing.*

TOBIAS then answered and said, Father, I will do all things which thou hast commanded me :

2 but how can I receive the money, seeing I know him not ?

3 Then he gave him the handwriting, and said unto him, Seek thee a man which may go with thee, whiles I yet live, and I will give him wages : and go and receive the money.

4 Therefore when he went to seek a man, he found Raphael that was an angel.

5 But he knew not ; and he said unto him, Canst thou go with me to Rages ? and knowest thou those places well ?

6 To whom the angel said, I will go with thee, and I know the way well : for I have lodged with our brother Gabael.

7 Then Tobias said unto him, Tarry for me, till I tell my father.

8 Then he said unto him, Go, and tarry not. So he went in and said to his father, Behold, I have

CHAPTER V.

2. "Seeing I know him not." There is added in the Hebrew and Vulgate, "What token shall I give him? Nor did I ever know the way which leadeth thither" (that is, into Media).

3. "The handwriting." The "note of hand" by which Gabael had acknowledged the receipt of the ten talents. See above, i. 14. "I have a note of his hand with me, which when thou shalt shew him, he will presently pay it" (*Vulgate*). "The Lord God of Israel keep thee in all thy ways, and give thee favour and mercy before the man" (*Hebrew*).

4. "He found Raphael." "He found a beautiful young man standing girded, and as it were ready to walk. And not knowing that he was an angel of God, he saluted him, and said, From whence art thou, good young man? But he answered, Of the children of Israel" (*Vulgate*). In the Hebrew, the angel addresses Tobias, saying, "Young man, whence art thou?"

6. "Our brother Gabael." The Vulgate adds, "who dwelleth at Rages, a city of the Medes, which is situate in the mount of Ecbatana." The Hebrew is more minute in the description : "It is two days' journey from Ecbatana to Rages ; and Rages is in the mountainous country, and Ecbatana in the plain."

TOBIT, V.

found one which will go with me. Then he said, Call him unto me, that I may know of what tribe he is, and whether he be a trusty man to go with thee.

9 So he called him, and he came in, and they saluted one another.

10 Then Tobit said unto him, Brother, shew me of what tribe and family thou art.

11 To whom he said, Dost thou seek for a tribe or family, or an hired man to go with thy son? Then Tobit said unto him, I would know, brother, thy kindred and name.

12 Then he said, I am Azarias, the son of Ananias the great, and of thy brethren.

9. "They saluted one another." According to the Hebrew and Vulgate, the angel said, "Joy be to thee, O man of God. And Tobit said, What manner of joy shall be to me, who sit in darkness, and see not the light of heaven? And the angel said unto him, He that made thee blind, and deprived thee of the light of thine eyes, will heal thee, because thou art just. Be of good courage, thy cure from God is at hand."

11. "Dost thou seek for a tribe," &c. The meaning is, perhaps, "Why shouldst thou enquire into the family of him thou hirest?" He had found a servant who would fulfil his desire, and accompany his son; why should he ask more? It is suggested by Gen. xxxii. 29, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" See also Judg. xiii. 18. On the other hand, Michael and Gabriel both declared their names (Dan. viii. 16; x. 13, 21. St. Luke i. 19.); and Raphael discovers himself in his true name and character, in xii. 15. The concealment of the name is one of the features of the writings called "Apocrypha." In this kind of literature, not only did the authors assume feigned names, but fanciful names and circumstances were introduced into the narratives, strict accuracy being accounted immaterial, so long as the abstract principles inculcated were true (Salvian, *Presbyter of Marseilles*, A.D. 445, *Epistle IX.*). Thus the angel may be supposed to express the views of the author of the Book of Tobit, "Do not enquire closely into my name, or the strict truth of the details of my story. Let it be enough that my purpose is your moral and spiritual edification, and that I am sent to do you good." Compare the modest conclusion of the Second Book of Maccabees (2 Macc. xv. 38, 39.).

12. "I am Azarias." By the names "Azariah," "the help of the Lord," and "Ananias," "the grace of the Lord," there was indicated the true purpose for which the angel was sent. But the angel is here described as deceiving Tobit, for he assumes the name and character of one whose family was known to him. In this respect the narrative must be taken as representing the author's notions about angels, and

TOBIT, V.

13 Then Tobit said, Thou art welcome, brother ; be not now angry with me, because I have enquired to know thy tribe and thy family ; for thou art my brother, of an honest and good stock : for I know Ananias and Jonathas, sons of that great Samaias, ^a as we went together to Jerusalem to worship, and ^a ch. 1. 6, 7. offered the firstborn, and the tenths of the fruits ; and they were not seduced with ^b the error of our ^b ch. 1. 4, 5. brethren : my brother, thou art of a good stock.

14 But tell me, what wages shall I give thee ? wilt thou a drachm a day, and things necessary, as to mine own son ?

15 Yea, moreover, if ye return safe, I will add something to thy wages.

16 So they were well pleased. Then said he to Tobias, Prepare thyself for the journey, and God send you a good journey. And when his son had prepared all things for the journey, his father said, Go thou with this man, and God, which dwelleth in heaven, prosper your journey, and the angel of God keep you company. So they went forth both, and the young man's dog with them.

not the doctrine of the Canonical Scriptures concerning them. We read there of angels appearing as men, but not of their assuming the person of any individual.

13. "Samaias." The name "Shemaiah" occurs frequently among the Levites, as in 1 Chr. xv. 8, 11, and elsewhere. The Hebrew Versions have "Salmon," or "Selomith."

"The error of our brethren." Either the worship of the calves (i. 5.), or of the "idols of this land," that is, of Nineveh (*Hebrew*).

14. "A drachm." In the Hebrew, "half a shekel of just weight." The word "drachm" is used for half a shekel in the Greek text of Gen. xxiv. 22. Exod. xxxviii. 26. It is said to have contained the eighth part of an ounce of gold or silver. As Tobit was in a condition of poverty, it is probable that the silver drachm is intended.

16. "So they were well pleased." In the Hebrew and Vulgate, "The angel said to him, I will lead thy son safe, and bring him to thee again safe."

"The angel of God keep you company." In the Hebrew, "May God Almighty send His angel before you," as in Gen. xxiv. 7. Tobit believed that one of God's angels would be deputed to be a guardian, guide, and companion to his son, to "keep him in all his ways" (Ps. xci. 11.).

"The young man's dog." The dog is mentioned again in xi. 4, and in the Vulgate of vi. 1. Though the dog is generally spoken of in Scripture with contempt or reproach, as a ravenous and unclean animal, there are instances in which its usefulness to man is recognised. The

TOBIT, VI.

17 But Anna his mother wept, and said to Tobit, Why hast thou sent away our son? is he not the staff of our hand, in going in and out before us?

² Let not money be added, but be the off-scouring of our son.

18 ² Be not greedy to add money to money: but let it be as refuse in respect of our child.

³ Or, So long as God hath granted us to live, this is sufficient.

19 ³ For that which the Lord hath given us to live with doth suffice us.

20 Then said Tobit to her, Take no care, my sister; he shall return in safety, and thine eyes shall see him.

21 For the good angel will keep him company, and his journey shall be prosperous, and he shall return safe.

22 Then she made an end of weeping.

CHAPTER VI.

⁴ The angel biddeth Tobias to take the liver, heart, and gall out of a fish, 10 and to marry Sara the daughter of Raguel: 16 and teacheth how to drive the wicked spirit away.

AND as they went on their journey, they came in the evening to the river Tigris, and they lodged there.

"dogs of the flock" are mentioned in Job xxx. 1. The watch-dogs are alluded to in Is. lvi. 10, 11; and, in St. Matt. xv. 27, the dogs are fed from their masters' table.

17. "The staff of our hand." "Thou hast taken the staff of our old age, and sent him away from us." He was "the son of their old age, to whom they entrusted their business, and the provision for their household" (*Hebrew* and *Vulgate*). "To go in and out" for any one was to "transact business for him; to have the charge of his affairs" (*Num.* xxvii. 17. 1 *Sam.* xviii. 13.).

18. "Be not greedy." Or, as some conjecture, "Do not prefer money to thy son; let it be refuse as compared to him." In the *Vulgate*, "I wish the money for which thou hast sent him had never been; for our poverty was sufficient for us, that we might account it as riches that we saw our son." "Our God would have fed us without this money" (*Hebrew*). In her maternal anxiety, she thought that some mischief might befall him by the way, and that the money which was the cause of the journey was not worth the risk which it involved.

20. "My sister." So the Hebrews addressed their wives, as being daughters of Abraham. So also Christian husbands may address those who are partakers of the same adoption through Christ, and heirs with them of the grace of life (1 *Cor.* ix. 5. 1 *Pet.* iii. 7.).

CHAPTER VI.

1. "They came in the evening." Their route lay through the district called Adiabene, to the South-East of Nineveh, and their first

TOBIT, VI.

2 And when the young man went down to wash himself, a fish leaped out of the river, and would have devoured him.

3 Then the angel said unto him, Take the fish. And the young man laid hold of the fish, and ² drew ² Or, *cast it upon the land.*

4 To whom the angel said, Open the fish, and take the heart and the liver and the gall, and put them up safely.

5 So the young man did as the angel commanded him; and when they had roasted the fish, they did eat it: then they both went on their way, till they drew near to Ecbatane.

6 Then the young man said to the angel, Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart and the liver and the gall of the fish?

7 And he said unto him, Touching the heart and the liver, if a devil or an evil spirit trouble any, we

halt would be at some town on the river Tigris. The town is called "Ledikia" in the Hebrew.

"Tigris." In Dan. x. 4 it is called "the great river Hiddekel." It is mentioned in Judith i. 6; and it is joined with Phison and Euphrates, two other rivers of Paradise, in Eccles. xxiv. 25, 26. The whole length of the Tigris is said to be 1,200 miles, and it reaches a breadth of 200 yards in the lower part of its course.

2. "A fish." "A monstrous fish" (*Hebrew and Vulgate*). Perhaps some amphibious animal is meant, like a hippopotamus (*Grotius*) or crocodile. The description in the Vulgate is rather of a fish: "Tobias, being afraid of him, cried out with a loud voice, saying, Sir, he cometh upon me. And the angel said to him, Be not afraid, Tobias; be a brave man, and take him by the gill, and draw him unto thee. And when he had done so, he drew him out upon the land, and he began to pant before his feet." Hence some infer that it was a voracious fish called "callionymus," portions of which are said to have been used as salves or medicines. Pliny and Galen are quoted as the authorities for this.

4. "Put them up safely." The Hebrew and Vulgate add, "for these are necessary for useful medicines." Also, "that after eating a portion of the fish, the rest they salted, as much as might serve them until they came to Rages, a city of the Medes."

6. "To what use." "What remedies are these things good for?" (*Vulgate*). Or, "What medicines wilt thou make out of the liver and gall of the fish?" (*Hebrew*).

7. "An evil spirit." The power of the evil spirit may have been felt in some grievous bodily disease or plague. So Satan smote Job with ulcers; and Satan bound the woman who had the spirit of infirmity (St. Luke xiii. 16.); and persons were said to be delivered to

TOBIT, VI.

must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed.

8 As for the gall, *it is good* to anoint a man that hath whiteness in his eyes, and he shall be healed.

9 And when they were come near to Rages,

10 the angel said to the young man, Brother, to day we shall lodge with Raguel, who is thy cousin; he also hath one only daughter, named Sara; I will speak for her, that she may be given thee for a wife.

² Or,
inheritance.

^a Num. 27. 8.
& 36. 8.

11 For to thee doth the ^{2a} right of her appertain, seeing thou only art of her kindred.

12 And the maid is fair and wise: now therefore hear me, and I will speak to her father; and when we return from Rages we will celebrate the marriage: for I know that Raguel cannot marry her to another according to the law of Moses, but he shall be guilty of death, because the right of inheritance doth rather appertain to thee than to any other.

13 Then the young man answered the angel, I have heard, brother Azarias, that this maid hath been given to seven men, who all died in the marriage chamber.

14 And now I am the only son of my father, and I am afraid, lest, if I go in unto her, I die, as the other before: for a wicked spirit loveth her, which

Satan for the "destruction of the flesh," to feel the power of the destroyer in bodily pain and sickness. So a remedy for a malady of an unusually virulent kind might be said to cause the demon to flee away, and to relinquish his hold upon the sufferer. "God was pleased to give to these things a virtue against those proud spirits, to make them, who affected to be like the Most High, subject to such mean corporeal substances, as instruments of His power" (*Douay Bible*).

8. "The gall." "It is good for anointing the eyes, in which there is a white speck." Pliny says that extracts were made from all kinds of marine and fresh-water fish for this purpose.

11. "To thee doth the right of her appertain." Tobias was the next of kin, who, according to the Law of Moses, could claim her and her inheritance. So the Vulgate: "All his substance is due to thee, and thou must take her to wife."

12. "He shall be guilty of death." Not that the punishment of death was inflicted by the Law, but that by wilfully transgressing a precept given him by God, he would incur His displeasure, and be worthy of death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 4.).

14. "A wicked spirit loveth her;" or, "has power over her," as in

TOBIT, VI.

hurteth no body, but those which come unto her : wherefore I also fear lest I die, and bring my father's and my mother's life because of me to the grave with sorrow : for they have no other son to bury them.

15 Then the angel said unto him, Dost thou not remember the precepts which thy father gave thee, that thou shouldest marry a wife of thine own kindred? wherefore hear me, O my brother ; for she shall be given thee to wife ; and make thou no reckoning of the evil spirit ; for this same night shall she be given thee in marriage.

16 And when thou shalt come into the marriage chamber, thou shalt take the ²ashes of perfume, ² Or, *embers*.

the Hebrew. This expression is not in the Vulgate, which only says, "They all died; moreover, I have heard that a devil killed them." The evil spirit might rather be said to "choke" or "torment" his victims than to "love" them. This is said of the evil spirit in the LXX. of 1 Sam. xvi. 14. See above, iii. 10.

15. "The angel said unto him." The speech of the angel is different in the Vulgate (from which the quotation in the Marriage Service is taken): "Hear me, and I will shew thee who they are over whom the devil can prevail. For they, who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power. But thou, when thou shalt take her, go into the chamber, and for three days keep thyself content from her, and give thyself to nothing else but to prayers with her. And on that night lay the liver of the fish on the fire, and the devil shall be driven away. But the second night thou shalt be admitted into the society of the holy patriarchs. On the third night thou shalt obtain blessing that sound children may be born of you. And when the third night is passed, thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust, that in the seed of Abraham thou mayest obtain a blessing in children." Three remedies were prescribed: united prayer, continence, and the fumigation; which point to three causes of the death of Sara's former partners, viz. the agency of a malignant demon, their own sin, and some virulent evil which was the natural means by which the demon destroyed them. In the older form of the English Marriage Service the allusion to this passage was more distinct, the pattern of married life being the "faithful living together of Tobias and Sara," instead of "Abraham and Sara," as it now stands. But the Vulgate refers to the married life of Abraham and Isaac in the words, "Thou shalt be admitted into the society of the holy patriarchs."

16. "Ashes of perfume." Perhaps the embers that remained on the altar, on which incense and sweet odours had been burned as an act of devotion to God.

TOBIT, VII.

and shalt lay upon them some of the heart and liver of the fish, and shalt make a smoke with it :

17 and the devil shall smell it, and flee away, and never come again any more : but when thou shalt come to her, rise up both of you, and pray to God which is merciful, who will have pity on you, and save you : fear not, for she is appointed unto thee from the beginning ; and thou shalt preserve her, and she shall go with thee. Moreover I suppose that she shall bear thee children. Now when Tobias had heard these things, he loved her, and his heart was ² effectually joined to her.

² Or,
vehemently.

CHAPTER VII.

11 Raguel telleth Tobias what had happened to his daughter : 12 and giveth her in marriage unto him. 17 She is conveyed to her chamber, and weepeth. 18 Her mother comforteth her.

AND when they were come to Ecbatane, they came to the house of Raguel, and Sara met them : and after they had saluted one another, she brought them into the house.

2 Then said Raguel to Edna his wife, How like is this young man to Tobit my cousin !

3 And Raguel asked them, From whence are ye,

17. "Appointed unto thee from the beginning." Literally, "prepared from of old," with reference to the eternal counsels of God, which are fulfilled by the dispositions of His providence, and His control of the events of this world. In the Hebrew: "She was chosen for thee before the creation of the world, and by thy hand the Lord shall deliver her from the demon."

CHAPTER VII.

1. "After they had saluted one another." In the Greek, "She" (Sara) "greeted him" (Tobias), "and he them." Compare the conclusion of chap. vi., "His soul clave unto her." She "bids him rejoice," or "welcomes him in peace," thus inviting him into her father's house. See Gen. xxiv. 23—25.

2. "Edna," or "Adnah," meaning "pleasure," or "delight,"—a name which recalls the Garden of Eden, and the first institution of marriage. In the Vulgate she is called "Anna."

"How like." See Eccus. xxx. 4; and compare the resemblance of Gideon to his brethren (Judg. viii. 18, 19.). It denoted the inward likeness of character and disposition, so that the son of such a father might be expected to inherit his piety and other virtues (1 Tim. 1, 2.).

"My cousin." In the Hebrew, "my brother," or the "son of my brother." See below, ver. 4.

TOBIT, VII.

brethren? To whom they said, We are of the sons of Nephthalim, which are captives in Nineve.

4 Then he said to them, Do ye know Tobit our kinsman? And they said, We know him. Then said he, Is he in good health?

5 And they said, He is both alive, and in good health: and Tobias said, He is my father.

6 Then Raguel leaped up, and kissed him, and wept,

7 and blessed him, and said unto him, Thou art the son of an honest and good man. But when he had heard that Tobit was blind, he was sorrowful, and wept.

8 And likewise Edna his wife and Sara his daughter wept. Moreover they entertained them cheerfully; and after that they had killed ²a ram ² a sucking ram, or, lamb, Junius. of the flock, they set store of meat on the table. Then said Tobias to Raphael, Brother Azarias, speak of those things of which thou didst talk in the way, and let this business be dispatched.

9 So he communicated the matter with Raguel: and Raguel said to Tobias, Eat and drink, and make merry:

10 for it is meet that thou shouldest marry my

5. "Tobias said." In the Vulgate: "When he was speaking many good things of him, the angel said to Raguel, Tobias, concerning whom thou enquirest, is this young man's father."

7. "And blessed him," saying, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son" (*Hebrew*), as in *Judg.* xvii. 2. *Ruth* iii. 10. It was customary for parents and elders to ask a blessing upon the young.

"Tobit was blind." Literally, "had lost his eyes," though the sight was not destroyed, but only obstructed or overclouded.

8. "They had killed." The Greek word often means "to sacrifice," but here it is simply "to kill;" as in *Acts* x. 13, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." It may be observed that there was no delay between the killing and preparing at once for food. See *Gen.* xviii. 7, 8.

"Set store of meat on the table." Or, "they set a plentiful provision before them;" "they commanded a feast to be prepared" (*Vulgate*). Compare *St. Luke* xv. 23. According to the *Hebrew*, the food was carefully cooked and prepared, and the feast was served in the evening.

9. "Make merry." The corresponding *Hebrew* phrase is, "Let thine heart be merry," as in *Esth.* i. 10; or, "comfort thine heart" (*Judg.* xix. 5, 6, 9.).

10. "It is meet." It was according to the *Levitical Law*, as Tobias was the nearest of kin. In the *Hebrew*, Raguel says, "It is better that I should give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man" (the words of Laban, in *Gen.* xxix. 19.).

daughter : nevertheless I will declare unto thee the truth.

11 I have given my daughter in marriage to seven men, who died that night they came in unto her : nevertheless for the present be merry. But Tobias said, I will eat nothing here, till we agree and swear one to another.

² Or, law.

12 Raguel said, Then take her from henceforth according to the ² manner, for thou art her cousin, and she is thine, and the merciful God give you good success in all things.

13 Then he called his daughter Sara, and she came to her father, and he took her by the hand, and gave her to be wife to Tobias, saying, Behold,
^a Num. 36. 6. take her after ^a the law of Moses, and lead her away to thy father. And he blessed them ;

11. "Who died that night," before the marriage was consummated (iii. 8.). The same is expressed in the two Hebrew Versions here.

"I will eat nothing." The same words are said by Abraham's servant in Gen. xxiv. 33. The Vulgate adds, Raguel "began to fear lest it might happen" to Tobias "also in like manner." "So he was in suspense, and gave no answer to his petition." "And the angel said to him, Be not afraid to give her to this man, for to him who feareth God is thy daughter due to be his wife ; therefore another could not have her." See on iii. 14, 15. In the Hebrew, Raguel says, "Abide until to-morrow, and then do what shall seem good unto thee."

12. "According to the manner." Literally, "judgment ;" "the just appointment of God's Law."

"In all things ;" or, "with the best of His gifts and blessings." In the Vulgate, he says : "I doubt not but God hath heard my prayers and tears in His sight. And I believe he hath therefore made you come to me, that this maid might be married to one of her own kindred, according to the Law of Moses." In the Hebrew, he adds : "The Lord God of heaven make you to dwell this night in peace, and bestow His mercy upon you."

13. "Took her by the hand." In the Vulgate : "And taking the right hand of his daughter, he gave it into the right hand of Tobias, saying, The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you ; and may He join you together, and fulfil His blessing in you." The joining of right hands was an ancient token of fellowship, as in Gal. ii. 9, "They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship." It was a mode of salutation, as in 2 Sam. xx. 9. In Lev. vi. 1, the "putting of the hand" signifies "fellowship," or formal agreement ; vows of allegiance or submission were sometimes made by "giving the hand" (1 Chr. xxix. 24.). It is, therefore, well suited to the matrimonial covenant, which combines in one the conditions and obligations of most other covenants.

TOBIT, VIII.

14 and called Edna his wife, and took paper, and did write an instrument *of covenants*, and sealed it.

15 Then they began to eat.

16 After Raguel called his wife Edna, and said unto her, Sister, prepare another chamber, and bring her in thither.

17 Which when she had done as he had bidden her, she brought her thither : and she wept, and she ²re- ² Or, *licked*. ceived the tears of her daughter, and said unto her,

18 Be of good comfort, my daughter ; the Lord of heaven and earth give thee joy for this thy sorrow : be of good comfort, my daughter.

CHAPTER VIII.

³ Tobias driveth the wicked spirit away, as he was taught. ⁴ He and his wife rise up to pray. ¹⁰ Raguel thought he was dead : ¹⁵ but finding him alive, praiseth God, ¹⁹ and maketh a wedding feast.

AND when they had supped, they brought Tobias in unto her.

2 And as he went, he remembered the words of ³ Or, *embers*. Raphael, and took the ³ ashes of the perfumes, and put the heart and the liver of the fish thereupon, and made a smoke *therewith*.

“Lead her away.” So, when Rebekah had given her consent, she was dismissed by her father and brother (Gen. xxiv. 57—59.).

14. “An instrument of covenants.” Probably containing the agreement, in viii. 21, by which Raguel made him his heir. So the Hebrew : “They wrote and sealed the document containing the amount of her dowry.” “They signed the writing, and sealed it before witnesses.”

16. “Another chamber.” Instead of the “chamber of death,” from the sight of which their daughter might well shrink with horror. But the Hebrew has simply, “an inner chamber.”

17. “She received the tears.” In the Hebrew, “Edna embraced her daughter Sara, and wept with her.” “When she began to weep in the bitterness of her soul, the Lord God accepted her tears.”

CHAPTER VIII.

2. “He took the ashes of the perfumes.” In the Hebrew : “He asked for a censer or incense-pan, with the burning embers in it, and he laid the fish’s liver and heart upon it. Then he fumigated Sara, her clothes, himself, and the whole house.” In accordance with the advice of the angel, he used the liver as a drug to counteract the noxious and pestilential influence which had been fatal to Sara’s former husbands. See above, vi. 7. The demon had probably poisoned them by some noxious gas which they inhaled, and hence the remedy was of a similar nature.

3 The which smell when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him.

4 And after that they were both shut in together, Tobias rose out of the bed, and said, Sister, arise, and let us pray that God would have pity on us.

5 Then began Tobias to say, Blessed art thou, O God of our fathers, and blessed is thy holy and glorious name for ever; let the heavens bless thee, and all thy creatures.

^a Gen. 2. 7,
18, 22.

6 ^aThou madest Adam, and gavest him Eve his wife for an helper and stay: of them came mankind: thou hast said, It is not good that man should

3. "The utmost parts of Egypt." This is mentioned (1.) on account of its remoteness from Media, and (2.) as a desert country, barren, and uninhabited by man. So in St. Matt. xii. 43, the unclean spirit is driven into the desert, and walks "through dry places." In St. Mark v. 10, the legion of unclean spirits pray that they may not be sent "out of the country," into the desert or the abyss. On the deserts of Egypt, see Is. xix. 5—7. Ezek. xxx. 7, 12.

"The angel bound him." The demon was detained, and not suffered to return or molest his victim any more. The power of thus expelling and binding demons was one of the gifts which Solomon was supposed to have received when he obtained wisdom from God. The Jews said that the herbs and incantations which were afterwards used for exorcising evil spirits were learned from him (Josephus, *Antiq.* VIII. ii.). The powers of evil are said to be bound or loosed, according as they are restrained from doing their work of destruction, or are suffered to hurt or molest men for a time (Rev. ix. 14, 15; xx. 1, 2.).

4. "After that they were both shut in." In the Hebrew: "When the angel was gone out of the room, they shut the door upon them." In the Vulgate, Tobias says: "Sara, arise, and let us pray unto God to-day and to-morrow and the next day; because for these three nights we are joined to God; and when the third night is over, we will be in our own wedlock. For we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God. So they both arose, and prayed earnestly both together that health might be given them."

6. "An helper and stay." Compare Eccclus. xxxvi. 24, "He that getteth a wife beginneth a possession, a help like unto himself, and a pillar of rest." So in Ps. cxliv. 12, daughters are compared to "corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace," contributing strength as well as beauty to the fabric. A virtuous matron is one in whom "her husband can safely trust" (Prov. xxxi. 11.). She is a "crown to her husband" (Prov. xii. 4.), the stay or pillar of his household, contributing to his reputation without, as well as to his domestic peace and happiness.

TOBIT, VIII.

be alone ; let us make unto him an aid like unto himself.

7 And now, O Lord, I take not this my sister for lust, but uprightly : *therefore* mercifully ordain that we may become aged together.

8 And she said with him, Amen.

9 So they slept both that night. And Raguel arose, and went and made a grave,

10 saying, *I fear* lest he also be dead.

11 But when Raguel was come into his house,

12 he said unto his wife Edna, Send one of the maids, and let her see whether he be alive : if *he be* not, that we may bury him, and no man know it.

13 So the maid opened the door, and went in, and found them both asleep,

14 and came forth, and told them that he was alive.

15 Then Raguel praised God, and said, O God, thou art worthy to be praised with all pure and holy praise ; therefore let thy saints praise thee with all thy creatures ; and let all thine angels and thine elect praise thee for ever.

16 Thou art to be praised, for thou hast made me joyful ; and that is not come to me which I sus-

“**Like unto himself.**” A rational friend and companion, such as could not be found for him amongst the inferior creation (Gen. ii. 19, 20.). This shows that one of the causes for which marriage was ordained was “the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have “of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.”

7. “**Not for fleshly lust, but uprightly.**” Literally, “Not for fornication, but in truth ;” that is, either “with a sincere purpose to be faithful to her,” or “to confirm Thy word, which is true,” by fulfilling the precepts of the Law of Moses (*Hebrew*) ; or, “for the love of posterity, “in which Thy Name may be blessed for ever and ever” (*Vulgate*).

8. “Sara also said, Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, “and let us grow old both together in health” (*Vulgate*).

9. “**Raguel arose.**” In the *Vulgate* : “He arose about the cock-crowing, and his servants went with him to dig a grave.”

10. “**Lest he also.**” In the *Vulgate* : “Lest it may have happened “to him in like manner as it happened to the other seven.”

11. In the *Vulgate* : “When they had prepared the pit, Raguel went “back to his wife.”

13. “**Asleep.**” With an expression of “peace and joy” on their faces, the token of a good conscience and trust in God (*Hebrew*).

16. “**Which I suspected.**” “For Thou hast shewn Thy mercy to us, “and hast shut out from us the enemy that persecuted us” (*Vulgate*).

TOBIT, IX.

pected ; but thou hast dealt with us according to thy great mercy.

17 Thou art to be praised, because thou hast had mercy of two that were the only begotten children of their fathers : grant them mercy, O Lord, and finish their life in health with joy and mercy.

18 Then Raguel bade his servants to fill the grave.

19 And he kept the wedding feast fourteen days.

20 For before the days of the marriage were finished, Raguel had said unto him by an oath, that he should not depart till the fourteen days of the marriage were expired ;

21 and then he should take the half of his goods, and go in safety to his father ; and should have the rest when I and my wife be dead.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *Tobias sendeth the angel unto Gabael for the money.* 6 *The angel bringeth it and Gabael to the wedding.*

THEN Tobias called Raphael, and said unto him,

“ Verily Thou art He that woundeth and healeth, that killeth and “maketh alive” (*Hebrew*).

17. “With joy and mercy.” “Make them, O Lord, bless Thee more fully ; and to offer up to Thee a sacrifice of Thy praise, and of “their health, that all nations may know that Thou alone art God in “all the earth” (*Vulgate*).

18. “To fill the grave.” “Before it was day” (*Vulgate*), “that it “might not be known that he had made it” (*Hebrew*).

19. “The wedding feast.” In the *Vulgate*, besides telling his wife to prepare provisions for the journey, “he caused two fat kine and four “wethers to be killed, and a banquet to be prepared for all his neighbors and all his friends ;” “because the Lord had made them glad “according to the multitude of His mercies” (*Hebrew*).

“Fourteen days.” This was double of the usual duration of a wedding feast. See Gen. xxix. 27. Judg. xiv. 12, 13, 17. Compare xi. 19. The feast was doubled to express the greatness of the joy of Sara’s parents at her unexpected deliverance.

21. “And should have the rest.” In the *Vulgate* : “He made a “writing, that the half that remained should, after their decease, come “also to Tobias.”

CHAPTER IX.

1. “And said unto him.” In the *Vulgate* he begins thus : “Brother “Azarias, I pray thee, hearken to my words. If I should give myself to “be thy servant, I should not make a worthy return for thy care.”

TOBIT, IX.

2 Brother Azarias, take with thee a servant, and two camels, and go to Rages of Media to Gabael, and bring me the money, and bring him to the wedding.

3 For Raguel hath sworn that I shall not depart.

4 But my father counteth the days; and if I tarry long, he will be very sorry.

5 So Raphael went out, and lodged with Gabael, and gave him the handwriting: who brought forth bags which were sealed up, and gave them to him.

6 And early in the morning they went forth both together, and came to the wedding: and ²Tobias ²Or, Gabael blessed his wife. ^{blessed Tobias and his wife, Junius.}

CHAPTER X.

¹Tobit and his wife long for their son. ⁷She will not be comforted by her husband. ¹⁰Raguel sendeth Tobias and his wife away, with half their goods, ¹²and blesseth them.

Unless he employed him in his business, he would not fulfil the purpose for which he had been hired.

2. "A servant." In the Hebrew he is requested to take "four servants and two camels," and to "restore to Gabael his note of hand, and "to receive of him the money." Raguel's house was in the district of Ecbatana (iii. 7.). According to the Vulgate, he lived in Rages; but this must be taken for the province, and not the city, of Rages.

3. "That I shall not depart." "That I shall not go forth from his house until the fourteenth day" (*Hebrew*).

4. "If I tarry long." "My father and my mother count the days; and if one day pass beyond the appointed time, they will be very "anxious" (*Hebrew*). Compare 1 Sam. ix. 5.

5. "Raphael went out." "He took four of Raguel's servants and two camels, and went to Rages" (*Vulgate*).

"Gave them to him." Raphael "told him that Tobias had married Sara, the daughter of Raguel, and invited him to the wedding feast" (*Hebrew*). "And Gabael put the money upon the camels, and came to Raguel's house, and found Tobias sitting at the table. And he leaped up, and they kissed each other, and Gabael wept, and blessed God, and said, The God of Israel bless thee, because thou art the son of a very good and just man, and that feareth God and doth almsdeeds; and may a blessing come upon thy wife, and upon your parents; and may you see your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generation; and may your seed be blessed by the God of Israel, Who reigneth for ever and ever. And when all had said Amen, they went to the feast; but the marriage feast they celebrated also with the fear of the Lord" (*Vulgate*). The feast was sanctified by religion, and chastened by temperance (Ecclus. xxxi. 12, 25, 28, 29.).

6. "Tobias blessed his wife." It should rather be, "He blessed Tobias and his wife," which would agree with the Hebrew and Vulgate.

TOBIT, X.

NOW Tobit his father counted every day: and when the days of the journey were expired, and they came not,

2 then Tobit said, Are they detained? or is Gabael dead, and there is no man to give him the money?

3 Therefore he was very sorry.

4 Then his wife said unto him, My son is dead, seeing he stayeth long; and she began to bewail him, and said,

5 Now I care for nothing, my son, since I have let thee go, the light of mine eyes.

6 To whom Tobit said, Hold thy peace, take no care, for he is safe.

7 But she said, Hold thy peace, and deceive me not; my son is dead. And she went out every day into the way which they went, and did eat no meat on the daytime, and ceased not whole nights to bewail her son Tobias, until the fourteen days of the wedding were expired, which Raguel had sworn that he should spend there. Then Tobias said to Raguel, Let me go, for my father and my mother look no more to see me.

CHAPTER X.

1. "The days of the journey." His absence was prolonged by fourteen days "upon occasion of the marriage" (*Vulgate*).

2. "Are they detained?" "He thought within himself, Perchance some accident has befallen him in the way, or Gabael is dead, and his heirs refuse to give him the silver" (*Hebrew*).

5. "Now I care for nothing." In the Vulgate she says: "Woe, woe is me, my son; why did we send thee to go to a strange country, the light of our eyes, the staff of our old age, the comfort of our life, the hope of our posterity! We, having all things together in thee alone, ought not to have let thee go from us." She says "the light of mine eyes," with reference to her own failing sight and other infirmities, as well as his father's blindness. See Job xxix. 15.

6. "He is safe." "They will return in joy and peace, safe and sound" (*Hebrew*); "for that man with whom we sent him is very trusty" (*Vulgate*).

7. "She went out." "She went into all the ways by which there seemed any hope he might return, that she might, if possible, see him coming afar off" (*Vulgate*).

"And did eat no meat." "Her tears were her meat day and night" (*Hebrew*).

"Look no more to see me." "They despair of my return, and think of nothing else" (*Hebrew*).

"Let me go." Compare Gen. xxx. 25, 26. Though marriage re-

TOBIT, X.

8 But his father in law said unto him, Tarry with me, and I will send to thy father, and they shall declare unto him how things go with thee.

9 But Tobias said, No; but let me go to my father.

10 Then Raguel arose, and gave him Sara his wife, and half his goods, servants, and cattle, and money:

11 and he blessed them, and sent them away, saying, The God of heaven give you a prosperous journey, my children.

12 And he said to his daughter, Honour thy father and thy mother in law, which are now thy parents, that I may hear good report of thee. And he kissed her. Edna also said to Tobias, The Lord of heaven restore thee, my dear brother, and grant that I may see thy children of my daughter Sara before I die, that I may rejoice before the Lord: behold, I commit my daughter unto thee ² of special ² Or, to be safely kept. trust; wherefore do not entreat her evil.

removes both sons and daughters from their parents (Gen. ii. 24.), it is the daughter that is given away, the choice of abode resting with the husband.

10. "Servants." Literally, "bodies." So in the LXX. of Gen. xxxvi. 6, Esau took all the "bodies" of his house; and in Gen. xxxiv. 29, "they took all their wealth;" LXX., "all their bodies." So in Bel and the Dragon, ver. 32, the two "carcasses" seem to have been "two bodies," or "slaves." See also 2 Macc. viii. 11. The Vulgate here has "menservants and womenservants," or "boys and girls." Compare the "two bands" with which Jacob returned from Padan-aram (Gen. xxxi. 17, 18; xxxii. 10.).

"And money." The Hebrew adds, "oxen and sheep, asses and camels, clothing of purple and linen, and vessels of gold and silver."

11. "A prosperous journey." In the Vulgate: "The holy angel of the Lord be with you in your journey, and bring you through safe; and may you find all things well about your parents, and may my eyes see your children before I die."

12. "Which are now thy parents." According to the law of God, which decrees that the husband and wife are to be one flesh (Gen. ii. 24.), and that the kindred of the one are to be accounted the flesh or kindred of the other. So Ruth "clave" to Naomi (Ruth i. 14—18.); and David, even when Saul persecuted him, would not forget that he was his "father" (1 Sam. xxiv. 11.). Sara was to be a daughter to Tobit and Anna, to be a comfort to them in their declining years. The enmity between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is one of the signs of a corrupt and demoralised state of society, in Micah vii. 6.

"Do not entreat her evil." In the Hebrew: "She is in thine hand;

TOBIT, XI.

CHAPTER XI.

6 *Tobias' mother spieth her son coming. 10 His father meeteth him at the door, and recovereth his sight. 14 He praiseth God, 17 and welcometh his daughter in law.*

AFTER these things Tobias went his way, praising God that he had given him a prosperous journey, and blessed Raguel and Edna his wife, and went on his way till they drew near unto Nineve.

2 Then Raphael said to Tobias, Thou knowest, brother, how thou didst leave thy father :

3 let us haste before thy wife, and prepare the house.

4 And take in thine hand the gall of the fish. So they went their way, and the dog went after them.

5 Now Anna sat looking about toward the way for her son.

6 And when she espied him coming, she said to his father, Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him.

“do not afflict her all her days, nor do her shame, for she goeth into “a foreign country, where she will be a stranger. And when she had “said this, her heart was somewhat wounded within her.” (Compare the words of Laban, in Gen. xxxi. 49, 50.). The Syriac adds: “Tobias “rejoiced, and praised the God of heaven and earth, and said, My wife’s “parents shall be honoured by me like my own parents all the days of “my life.” The Vulgate adds, that Sara was charged “to love her husband, to take care of the family, to govern the house, and to behave “herself irreprehensibly” (Titus ii. 4, 5.).

CHAPTER XI.

1. “Given him a prosperous journey.” Or, “had prospered his “way” (Gen. xxiv. 21.). He had succeeded in the object of his journey, and greater and unexpected blessings had been added to him.

“They drew near unto Nineve.” According to the Vulgate, “they “came to Charan, which is in the midway to Nineveh, the eleventh “day.” The Hebrew calls the place “the city of Akrim, which is over “against Nineveh.” In the Syriac, “Basri, which is opposite Nineveh.”

3. “Before thy wife.” The Vulgate adds, “And let the family “follow softly after us, together with thy wife, and with the beasts.” This may be taken from Gen. xxxiii. 13, 14. Tobias and Raphael here fulfil the office of forerunner, the courier who precedes the caravan, to prepare a place of reception for the rest of the travellers (Num. x. 33.).

5, 6. “Anna sat,” &c. “She sat beside the way daily on the top “of a hill, from whence she might see afar off” (*Vulgate*). “And she “saw the dog coming at full speed” (*Syriac*). “She presently perceived “it was her son coming, and returning she told her husband” (*Vulgate*).

TOBIT, XI.

7 Then said Raphael, I know, Tobias, that thy father will open his eyes.

8 Therefore anoint thou his eyes with the gall, and being pricked therewith, he shall rub, and the whiteness shall fall away, and he shall see thee.

9 Then Anna ran forth, and fell upon the neck of her son, and said unto him, Seeing I have seen thee, my son, from henceforth I am content to die. And they wept both.

10 Tobit also went forth toward the door, and stumbled: but his son ran unto him,

11 and took hold of his father: and he strake of the gall on his father's eyes, saying, Be of good hope, my father.

12 And when his eyes began to smart, he rubbed them;

7. "Will open his eyes." The Vulgate has, "As soon as thou shalt come into thine house, forthwith adore the Lord thy God; and giving thanks to Him, go to thy father, and kiss him." "I know that thy father is blind; but by this gall his eyes shall be opened, and he shall be healed" (*Hebrew*).

8. "Being pricked therewith." In the Syriac: "When thou shalt come to thy father, and his eyes shall be near to thee, squeeze this gall into them when they are open; then he will shut them fast; and as he shuts them, the whiteness will be peeled away." The Vulgate adds, "Then thy father shall see the light of heaven, and shall rejoice in the sight of thee."

9. "Then Anna ran forth." In the Syriac: "She put on a veil, and went out to meet her son."

"I am content to die,"—the one desire of her life being accomplished. So Israel spoke to Joseph (Gen. xli. 30.). Simeon used similar words when his heart's desire was fulfilled (St. Luke ii. 26, 29, 30.). The Vulgate omits this, and inserts the following words: "Then the dog, which had been with them in the way, ran before, and coming as if he had brought the news, shewed his joy by his fawning and wagging his tail." Bede compares the dog to the faithful watchers of Christ's fold, who are also messengers of good tidings to men. So Homer described the dog "Argos" dying, in its twentieth year, at the sight of its old master.

10. "Tobit also." "His father that was blind, rising up, began to run, stumbling with his feet; and giving a servant his hand, went to meet his son" (*Vulgate*).

11. "And took hold." "He fell at his father's feet" (*Hebrew*). In the other Versions his father is said to fall, and Tobias sets him upon his feet again. Then his father opened both his eyes, desiring to kiss his son (*Syriac*). Then Tobias squeezed the gall into his father's eyes.

TOBIT, XI.

13 and the whiteness pilled away from the corners of his eyes : and when he saw his son, he fell upon his neck.

14 And he wept, and said, Blessed art thou, O God, and blessed is thy name for ever ; and blessed are all thine holy angels :

15 for thou hast scourged, and hast taken pity on me : for, behold, I see my son Tobias. And his son went in rejoicing, and told his father the great things that had happened to him in Media.

16 Then Tobit went out to meet his daughter in law at the gate of Nineve, rejoicing, and praising God : and they which saw him go marvelled, because he had received his sight.

17 But Tobit gave thanks before them, because God had mercy on him. And when he came near to Sara his daughter in law, he blessed her, saying, Thou art welcome, daughter : God be blessed, which hath brought thee unto us, and *blessed be* thy father and thy mother. And there was joy among all his brethren which were at Nineve.

13. "Pilled away." In the Vulgate: "He stayed about half an hour, and a white skin began to come out of his eyes, like the skin of an egg. And Tobias took hold of it, and drew it from his eyes, and immediately he recovered his sight." His blindness, according to the Vulgate, was for four years ; but, according to the Greek, eight years (xiv. 2.). In the Syriac: "Tobit shut his eyes, and said, What hast thou done to me, my son? Tobias answered, Be of good hope, my father : this is a medicine, and will restore thy sight. And he supported his father ; and whilst he held him up, the drug caused the whiteness to peel away, and Tobit saw the light, and glorified God."

14. "Blessed are all thine holy angels." The angels are blessed, as being "the kingdom of God" (xiii. 1, 2.), the ministers and agents of His providence, by whom His blessings are conveyed to men. So there is an honour and reverence which is due to the angels, though the service of praise is to be given to God only.

16. "Then Tobit went out." In the Vulgate: "After seven days Sara his son's wife and all the family arrived safe, and the cattle and the camels, and abundance of money of his wife's ; and that money also which he had received of Gabael." But in the Syriac, Tobias after informing them of his marriage, and his other success, adds, that "Sara was already at the city gates. And Tobit and Anna rejoiced with their friends and neighbours, and went out to meet her. And those who went with them were astonished at Tobit, because he was able to walk without any one holding his hand." The "seven days" probably belong to the wedding feast which followed, and not to the interval before Sara's arrival.

TOBIT, XII.

18 And Achiacharus, ² and Nasbas his brother's ^{2 Junius, who is also called Nasbas.} son, came:
19 and Tobias' wedding was kept seven days with great joy.

CHAPTER XII.

5 *Tobit offereth half to the angel for his pains. 6 But he calleth them both aside, and exhorteth them, 15 and telleth them that he was an angel, 21 and was seen no more.*

THEN Tobit called his son Tobias, and said unto him, My son, see that the man have his wages, which went with thee, and thou must give him more.

2 And Tobias said unto him, O father, it is no harm to me to give him half of those things which I have brought:

3 for he hath brought me again to thee in safety, and made whole my wife, and brought me the money, and likewise healed thee.

4 Then the old man said, It is due unto him.

5 So he called the angel, and he said unto him,

18. "Nasbas." Supposed by some to be another name of Achiacharus, or Achior (*Vulgate*). See above, i. 21, 22.

19. "Wedding." A feast or entertainment in honour of the marriage, not the wedding or nuptial feast properly so called. In the Hebrew: "All the Jews in Nineveh rejoiced for the great mercy which the Lord had shewn to Tobit and his son, and they brought to Tobit many valuable presents." This is founded upon Job xlii. 11.

CHAPTER XII.

1. "Then." "When the feast was ended, and the guests were gone" (*Syriac*).

"His wages." For his services as guide or courier he was to receive a drachm a day, and his provisions (v. 14, 15.).

3. "In safety." The *Vulgate* adds: "He received the money of Gabael, he caused me to have my wife, he chased from her the evil spirit, he gave joy to her parents; myself he delivered from being devoured by the fish; thee also he hath made to see the light of heaven, and we are filled with all good things through him. What can we give him sufficient for these things?" "I have also enough wherewith to recompense him" (*Syriac*, from Gen. xxxiii. 11.).

4. "It is due." The benefits received were past reckoning; and the "half" is proposed as the largest amount that he could rightly alienate from himself, especially if it included Sara's dowry in addition to the sum received from Gabael.

5. "He called the angel." "The father and the son calling him

TOBIT, XII.

Take half of all that ye have brought, and go away in safety.

6 Then he took them both apart, and said unto them, Bless God, praise him, and magnify him, and praise him for the things which he hath done unto you in the sight of all that live. It is good to praise God, and exalt his name, and ² honourably to shew forth the works of God; therefore be not slack to praise him.

² Or, with honour.

7 It is good to keep close the secret of a king, ^a 1 Pet. 3. 13. but it is honourable to reveal the works of God. ^a Do that which is good, and no evil shall touch you.

8 Prayer is good with fasting and alms and right-

"took him aside" (*Vulgate*). They said, "Brother Azarias, accept as the reward of thy labour the half of all you have brought" (*Hebrew*).

6. "Praise him, and magnify him." Or, "acknowledge His benefit, and ascribe to Him greatness and majesty."

"Honourably to shew forth." Or, "to honour Him by shewing forth His works." The expressions are taken from Ps. xcii. 1; cxlvii. 1.).

7. "The secret of a king." Literally, "the mystery;" "the secrets of the kingdom" (*Hebrew*), which are only confided to a few counsellors, upon whom strict silence is enjoined (*Judith* ii. 2.). The saying resembles that of *Prov.* xxv. 2, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable." God also has His secret things, His ways that are past finding out (*Deut.* xxix. 29. *Rom.* xi. 33.). It is therefore good to conceal the secrets of the great King, to be ignorant where it is His will that we should be ignorant, and to be silent upon matters which are not revealed. There were some things which the Apostle St. Paul would not divulge to those who were imperfect or incapable of receiving them (*1 Cor.* ii. 6, 7.); following Christ's precept not to cast pearls before swine (*St. Matt.* vii. 6; xiii. 11.). Hence this passage is alleged by Origen and St. Athanasius against irreverence, and the discussion of Divine mysteries before the profane or unbelieving.

"Honourable." Or, "it is good to reveal the works of God to His glory," that others may hear and wonder, and praise the doer of them. The works of God, which manifest His power, goodness, mercy, and truth, are not to be concealed (*Ps.* xl. 10.). So St. Paul "kept back nothing that was profitable to his hearers" (*Acts* xx. 20, 27.).

"No evil shall touch you." Those who love God and obey Him are not "hurt" by the evil which seems to befall them. God makes it work for their good. So it was with Tobit's blindness and affliction. "Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (*1 Pet.* iii. 13. *Ps.* xci. 9, 10.). "There shall no evil happen to the just" (*Prov.* xii. 21.).

8. "Prayer is good," &c. That is, "fasting and alms are aids to prayer, and render our petitions more effectual with God." For the

TOBIT, XII.

eousness. ^b A little with righteousness is better than ^b Ps. 37. 16. much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold :

9 ^c for alms doth deliver from death, and shall ^c ch. 4. 10. purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness shall be filled with life :

"merciful" shall "obtain mercy;" and "whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself and shall not be heard" (Prov. xxi. 13.). So St. Cyprian says, Our prayers must not be barren and sterile like the unfruitful tree, for they are presented to Him Who in the day of judgment will render a reward for good works and alms-deeds.

"It is better to give alms than to lay up gold." Compare Eccles. xxix. 9—13. Avarice and the hoarding of earthly treasure brings no good to the possessor or to any other. It is for no profit that he "bereaves his soul of good" (Eccles. iv. 8.), and is "poor in the midst of great wealth;" but he who impoverishes himself by liberal almsgiving, finds a reward both here and hereafter. See James v. 1—3, where those who lay up gold are said to treasure up "rust, which will eat their flesh as it were fire." There is no poverty so abject as that of the miser (Prov. xi. 24. Eccles. v. 13, 14.).

9. "Alms doth deliver from death." See above, iv. 10, and xiv. 11. The expression may be taken from Ps. xli. 1, where it is said of the merciful man that the Lord will "deliver him" in time of trouble. The saying is quoted in the Homily "On Almsdeeds," together with Eccles. iii. 30, "Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins;" also Heb. xiii. 16, almsdeeds are "sacrifices which God is well pleased." The Homily proceeds thus: "To be merciful and charitable in helping the poor is the means to keep the soul pure and clean in the sight of God. Merciful almsdealing is profitable to purge the soul from the infection and filthy spots of sin. A great confidence may they have before the high God, that shew mercy and compassion to them that are afflicted. Deeds of mercy are as salves and remedies to heal the sores and grievous diseases of the soul." A writer of the fifth century (*Salvian*) says: "Our Saviour and our God says that there is nothing safer or more salutary for every man, than to bestow his goods and substance in works of mercy. Those who distribute their own become richer, and mercy delivers from death. But to those who withhold their hands from good works it is said, Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation! Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire! Avarice and selfishness shall have their portion with the devil and his angels." Of those to whom much is given, much shall be required. Let the poor also bring their offerings, for the widow who offers her two mites is rich toward God. Let none appear before God empty.

"And shall purge away all sin." Alms are said to atone for sin, because if they are given for the love of God, they are an acceptable sacrifice to Him, and obtain a favourable answer to prayer. So St. John the Baptist preached "almsgiving" as a work of repentance (St. Luke iii. 10, 11.). "Alms are effectual to the pardon of sin, because they

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10 but they that sin are enemies to their own life.

11 Surely I will keep close nothing from you. For I said, It was good to keep close the secret of a king, but that it was honourable to reveal the works of God.

12 Now therefore, when thou didst pray, and Sara thy daughter in law, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One: and when thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee likewise.

13 And when thou didst not delay to rise up, and

“obtain the grace of repentance, and are fruits of repentance. Hence “St. Chrysostom says that ‘repentance without alms is dead’” (Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Dying*).

Thus both ancient and modern divines testify against the Antinomian teaching, which pretends that good works and almsdeeds are of no account before God. On the other hand, the ancient teachers of the Church guard against any perversion of this precept. For alms is not an atonement in the sense in which the blood of Christ cleanses from sin,—the meritorious cause of our salvation and justification,—but only in the sense in which “to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation” (Ecclus. xxxv. 3.). Compare Ecclus. v. 5. So Lactantius wrote: “Think not that “because sins are taken away by alms, that by thy money thou mayest “purchase a licence to sin; for sins are abolished, if because thou hast “sinned thou givest to God. But if thou sinnest upon confidence of “giving, thy sins are not abolished. For God desires infinitely that “men should be purged from their sins, and therefore commands us to “repent; but to repent is nothing else than to profess and affirm that “they will sin no more.” So Cyprian explained that almsgiving is an act of penitence on the part of those who have been delivered from death by the blood of Christ, and purged by the saving grace of baptism. Lastly, almsgiving is the special remedy for sins of avarice, covetousness, or fraud; and wealth and gain, however acquired, are as it were uncircumcised and unclean till they are purged by almsgiving (Lev. xix. 23. St. Luke xi. 41.).

“Shall be filled with life.” In the Vulgate: “shall find mercy and “life everlasting.” “Whoso doeth righteousness, God will satisfy him “with length of days” (*Hebrew*).

10. “Enemies.” So they are said to “choose” or “love death” (Prov. viii. 36. Wisd. i. 12.).

12. “When thou didst pray.” In the Hebrew: “Call to mind “the hour in which thou didst pray. In that same hour thy daughter- “in-law Sara was praying.” “When thou wast praying and pouring “out thy prayer to the holy and blessed Lord, thou and Sara, in the “affliction of your souls, then I presented your prayers before the throne “of His majesty.” So prayers are said to be made in the presence of the angels (Ps. cxxxviii. 1. Eccles. v. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 10.). Angels also present the prayers of the saints (Acts x. 3. 4. Rev. viii. 3, 4.).

leave thy dinner, ²to go and cover the dead, thy good deed was not hid from me : but I was with thee. ² Gr. *to go and bury.*

14 And now God hath sent me to heal thee and Sara thy daughter in law.

15 I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.

16 Then they were both troubled, and fell upon their faces : for they feared.

17 But he said unto them, Fear not, for it shall go well with you ; praise God therefore.

18 For not of any favour of mine, but by the

13. "To cover the dead." The Greek word means, "to enfold or wrap with grave-clothes." It occurs again in Ecclus. xxxviii. 16.

"I was with thee." The angels are also watchers, and "witnesses" of men's actions, "the eyes of the Lord running to and fro in the earth" (Dan. iv. 17. 2 Chr. xvi. 9. 1 Tim. v. 21. 1 Cor. iv. 9.).

14. "And now." The Vulgate adds here : "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." So the Syriac : "When the temptation came upon thee, God sent me to deliver thee." Compare Ecclus. ii. 5. Wisd. iii. 5, 6. Tobit was afflicted with poverty and blindness, that he might obtain a greater measure of God's favour and grace, and that his latter end might be more blessed than the beginning.

15. "One of the seven holy angels." These may answer to the "seven eyes" in Zech. iii. 9, which are said, in Zech. iv. 10, to be the "eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth ;" or to the "seven spirits before the throne" in Rev. i. 4, which, however, are more usually understood to signify the "seven operations of the Divine Spirit." The number "seven" is omitted in two of the Versions (Hebrew and Syriac), where Raphael is described simply as "one of the princes," or "angels," who stand before the throne of God and minister to Him. The words in Rev. viii. 2 are most like those which are here ascribed to Raphael : "I saw the seven angels which stood before God."

"Present the prayers." "Not as mediators and intercessors, adding virtue to their prayers from their merits ; for this belongs to our Saviour Christ alone, the only meritorious Mediator between God and man ; but as messengers relating and reporting our prayers before God" (*Bull*).

"Which go in and out." Some have thought that this idea of the "seven princes" of the kingdom of God was suggested by the seven chief princes of Persia (Esth. i. 14. Ezra vii. 14.). Jewish commentators on Deut. xxxii. 8, speak of "seventy angels" as presiding over the nations of men.

16. "Fell upon their faces." So Manoah and his wife prostrated themselves (Judg. xiii. 20.).

17. "Fear not." "Peace be unto you. Fear not, but praise God, for ye have found favour in His eyes" (*Hebrew*). Compare Judg. vi. 23.

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will of our God I came; wherefore praise him for ever.

^a Gen. 18. 8.

& 19. 3.

Judg. 13. 16.

19 ^dAll these days I did appear unto you; but I did neither eat nor drink, but ye did see a vision.

20 Now therefore give God thanks: for I go up to him that sent me; but write all things which are done in a book.

21 And when they arose, they saw him no more.

22 Then they confessed the great and wonderful works of God, and how the angel of the Lord had appeared unto them.

CHAPTER XIII.

The thanksgiving unto God, which Tobit wrote.

THEN Tobit wrote a prayer of rejoicing, and said, Blessed be God that liveth for ever, and blessed be his kingdom.

18. "For ever." "Praise Him all the days of your life, for the great "and wonderful things that He has done for you" (*Hebrew*).

19. "I did neither eat nor drink." In the Vulgate: "I seemed "indeed to eat and to drink with you: but I use an invisible meat and "drink, which cannot be seen by men;" that is, "I feed upon God's "commandments" (St. John iv. 34.). The other Versions say that he ate and drank in appearance and not in reality. So the Jews say, "that "Moses was like an angel, because he did neither eat nor drink." Our Lord also, in speaking of the heavenly and spiritual life of the saints after the resurrection, said that they should be "like the angels in "heaven." "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God." So that which the angel received from Gideon, in Judg. vi. 19—21, was consumed with fire, and not eaten. So the Targums on Gen. xviii. 8 say, "They seemed as though they ate." Others think that the "eating" of the angels should be taken literally, for fear of giving any countenance to the error of the Docetæ, who denied the reality of our Lord's body, or that He truly ate and drank after His resurrection (*Burton*).

20. "Now therefore." They are commanded to "arise up from the "earth" to which they had fallen (*Syriac*), and "to make a chronicle or "record of the wonderful things that had happened to them, to be a "testimony between them and God all the days of their life" (*Hebrew*).

21. "Saw him no more." "The angel of the Lord ascended into "heaven, and appeared no more to Tobit and his son" (*Hebrew*). "When "they arose, they sought him, but he was nowhere to be found" (*Syriac*). "Then they, lying prostrate for three hours upon their face, blessed God" (*Vulgate*).

CHAPTER XIII.

1. "Tobit wrote a prayer," or song, "of rejoicing." This agrees with all the Versions except the Vulgate, which relates that "he opened "his mouth and blessed the Lord."

"His kingdom." In the other Versions, "Blessed be the living God,

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2 ^a For he doth scourge, and hath mercy: he ^a Deut. 32. 39.
leadeth down to hell, and bringeth up again: nei- ¹ Sam. 2. 6.
ther is there any that can avoid his hand. ^{Wisd. 16. 13.}

3 Confess him before the Gentiles, ye children of Israel: for he hath scattered us among them.

4 There declare his greatness, and extol him before all the living: for he is our Lord, and he is the God our Father for ever.

5 And he will scourge us for our iniquities, and will have mercy again, ^b and will gather us out of ^b Deut. 30. 3.
all nations, among whom he hath scattered us.

6 If ye turn to him with your whole heart, and with your whole mind, and deal uprightly before him, then will he turn unto you, and will not hide his face from you. Therefore see what he will do with you, and confess him with your whole mouth, and praise the Lord of might, and extol the everlasting King. In the land of my captivity do I praise him, and declare his might and majesty to a sinful nation. O ye sinners, turn and do justice

"Whose kingdom endureth unto all ages." Or, "His kingdom" might be His host of angels, as above, xi. 14, and Wisd. x. 10.

2. "He doth scourge," &c. This is taken from Hos. vi. 1, and 1 Sam. ii. 6.

3. "He hath scattered us." "He hath therefore scattered you" among the Gentiles who know not Him, that you may declare His "wonderful works, and make them know that there is no other Almighty God besides Him." It was the merciful purpose of God that "the fall" of His own people should be "the riches of the world" (Rom. xi. 12.), to draw thousands of strangers and proselytes to the knowledge of the Creator, and that His house might be a house of prayer for all people (Is. lvi. 6, 7. Esth. viii. 17.).

4. "Before all living." "We are bound to declare all His wondrous works among the nations" (*Hebrew*). At this point one of the Hebrew editions concludes the book, with a short exhortation to the sons of Israel to practise almsgiving. The Syriac edition omits the latter part of the "prayer of Tobit," from vv. 8 to 18.

"Our Father for ever." "He is our Father from everlasting, and world without end; and He will be our Saviour" (*Hebrew*).

5. "Again." In the Hebrew: "He chastens that He may have mercy upon you in your latter end," as in Deut. viii. 16.

6. "Confess Him." "Ye shall wonder at the multitude of His miracles, and at the marvellous things which He will do before you" (*Hebrew*).

"To a sinful nation." That is, to the Assyrians of Nineveh, a nation of idolaters, whose sins had provoked God's displeasure, so that He sentenced their city to perish (xiv. 4.). The wondrous things which

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^c Jonah 3. 9. before him: ^c who can tell if he will accept you, and have mercy on you?

7 I will extol my God, and my soul shall praise the King of heaven, and shall rejoice in his greatness.

8 Let all men speak, and let all praise him for his righteousness.

² Or, *he will lay a scourge upon the works of thy children.* 9 O Jerusalem, the holy city, ² he will scourge thee for thy children's works, and will have mercy again on the sons of the righteous.

³ Or, *to make.* 10 Give praise to the Lord, *for he is good*: and praise the everlasting King, that his tabernacle may be builded in thee again with joy, and ³ let him make joyful there in thee those that are captives, and love in thee for ever those that are miserable.

^d Ps. 72. 10, 11. 11 ^d Many nations shall come from far to the name

God had done for His people in their captivity, might perhaps move the Assyrians to repent.

"Who can tell," &c. See Jonah iii. 9. The Hebrew adds, "For He is gracious and merciful, longsuffering, plenteous in goodness and truth."

7. "In his greatness." The Hebrew adds, "Honour and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary" (Ps. xcvi. 6.).

8. "Let all men speak." In the Vulgate: "Bless ye the Lord, all His elect; keep days of joy, and give glory to Him."

9. "He will scourge thee." A prediction of the impending ruin of Jerusalem, after its capture by Nebuchadnezzar. For the faith and piety of Hezekiah had only obtained a brief respite, and he was warned that his sons should go as hostages to Babylon (Is. xxxix. 6, 7.). The Vulgate has, "The Lord hath chastised thee for the works of thy hands," making the reference to be to the past afflictions which had come upon the kingdom of Judah.

"Again." The Hebrew adds, from Jer. xxxi. 17, "There is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border."

10. "That his tabernacle may be builded," &c. This is a prediction of the return from captivity and the rebuilding of the Temple, when God's glory should again "tabernacle" in His land. See Ps. lxxxv. 9. Zech. ii. 5, 10, 11. The Hebrew has: "He will return unto thee, and cause His Name to dwell in the midst of thee. He will build up all thy waste places, and will gather unto thee with joy all thy captivity, and He will plant all thy sons in the midst of thee for ever." The Vulgate adds, "Thou shalt shine with a glorious light, and all the ends of the world shall worship thee." The light of God's presence should glorify Jerusalem before all the nations, and their kings should bow down to her (Is. xlix. 23.).

11. "Many nations." The Hebrew adds, from Ps. lxxii. 10, "The

of the Lord God with gifts in their hands, even gifts to the King of heaven; all generations shall praise thee with great joy.

12 Cursed *are* all they which hate thee, and blessed shall all be which love thee for ever.

13 Rejoice and be glad for the children of the just: for they shall be gathered together, and shall bless the Lord of the just.

14 °O blessed *are* they which love thee, *for* they shall rejoice in thy ²peace: blessed *are* ²they which have been sorrowful for all thy scourges; for they shall rejoice for thee, when they have seen all thy glory, and shall be glad for ever.

° Ps. 122. 6.

² Or,

^{prosperity.}
† Is. 66. 10.

15 Let my soul bless God the great King.

16 For Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires, and emeralds, and precious stone: thy walls and towers and battlements with pure gold.

17 And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl and carbuncle and stones of Ophir.

"kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." The offerings of the nations to God and His sanctuary are also described in Ps. xvi. 7, 8. Is. lx. 6, 7, 9. Zech. xiv. 14. The Vulgate adds, "they shall esteem thy land as holy;" as having a sanctification by reason of the signs of God's presence in the midst of it.

15. "The great King." The Vulgate adds: "Bless thou the Lord, because the Lord our God hath delivered Jerusalem His city from all her troubles. Happy shall I be, if there shall remain of my seed to see the glory of Jerusalem." The glory which was anticipated by the spirit of prophecy, was in part realised in the times of Cyrus and Zerubbabel, but awaited its fuller revelation in the advent of Christ (Hag. ii. 9.).

16. "Sapphires." From Is. liv. 11, 12, "I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and will lay thy foundations with sapphires." Such gems and precious stones were amongst the materials of Solomon's Temple (1 Chr. xxix. 2.), introduced into the rich and costly pavements, and elsewhere. But the chief glory of the holy city proceeded, not from this earthly wealth and splendour, but from the presence of God in the midst of it. The description of the splendour of the holy city is applied, in Rev. xxi. 18, 19, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church triumphant, in which all the sayings of the prophets shall be fully realised.

"Battlements;" or, "bulwarks," as in Is. xxvi. 1.

17. "Beryl and carbuncle." In the Vulgate, "white and clean stones." The pure beauty and lustre of these gems are a type of the heavenly treasure, of the incorruptible good things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

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18 And all her streets shall say, Alleluia; and they shall praise him, saying, Blessed be God, which hath extolled it for ever.

CHAPTER XIV.

3 *Tobit giveth instructions to his son, 8 specially to leave Nineve. 11 He and his wife die, and are buried. 12 Tobias removeth to Ecbatane, 14 and there died, after he had heard of the destruction of Nineve.*

SO Tobit made an end of praising God.

2 And he was eight and fifty years old when he lost his sight, which was restored to him after eight years: and he gave alms, and he ²increased in the fear of the Lord God, and praised him.

² Or, did more and more fear.

3 And when he was very aged, he called his son, and the six sons of his son, and said to him, My son, take thy children; for, behold, I am aged, and am ready to depart out of this life.

18. "Shall say, Alleluia." The streets shall resound with the festival song of praise. "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (Is. lx. 18; li. 3.). Alleluia! "Praise ye the Lord," which is prefixed to many of the Psalms, is said to be the heavenly song of triumph: "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. xix. 6.).

"Extolled it." The Vulgate adds, "May He reign over it for ever and ever!"

CHAPTER XIV.

1. "Praising God." The Vulgate adds, "And after Tobit was restored to his sight, he lived two and forty years, and saw the children of his grandchildren." According to this version of the story, he lived to be 102, and the total is the same in the Syriac, where it is said that he became blind at 58; that he was blind for seven years; and that he lived 37 years after his eyes were opened. In the Greek, he is said to have lived to be 158 (below, ver. 11.), or 92 years after his recovery of sight.

2. "After eight years." In the Vulgate, the period of his blindness is reduced to four years, from the fifty-sixth to the sixtieth year of his age.

"He increased." Or, he "persevered;" literally, "he added to fear the Lord." In the Hebrew, "He feared the Name of God even more, glorifying at all times." "The rest of his life was in joy, and with great increase of the fear of God he departed in peace" (*Vulgate*). See Prov. iv. 18. Ps. lxxi. 14.

3. "Very aged." "And he lived to a great age" (*Greek*); "and when he was dying" (*Syriac*); "in the hour of his death, he called unto him his son Tobias, and the seven youths his grandsons" (*Vulgate*).

"Ready to depart." Literally, "to run, or flee away." So Isaac and

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4 Go into Media, my son, for I surely believe those things which ^aJonas the prophet spake of Nineve, ^aJonah 3. 4. that it shall be overthrown; and that for a time peace shall rather be in Media; and that our brethren shall lie scattered in the earth from that good land: and Jerusalem shall be desolate, and the house of God in it shall be burned, and shall be desolate for a time;

5 ^band that again God will have mercy on them, ^bEzra 3. 8. & 6. 14. and bring them again into the land, where they shall build a temple, but not like to the first, until the time of that age be fulfilled; and afterward they shall return from *all* places of their captivity, and build up Jerusalem gloriously, and the house of God shall be built in it ²for ever with a glorious building, as the prophets have spoken thereof.

²for ever is
not in the
Roman
copy.

Jacob gave their parting blessings and injunctions, when they supposed that their end was near (Gen. xxvii. 2; xlvii. 29.).

4. "Jonas the prophet." It has been thought that the name "Jonas" has been inserted by error in the Greek and Hebrew text, and that the prophet meant is Nahum. The evil threatened by Jonah was averted by timely repentance; but the Ninevites relapsed into their former sins, and then their ruin was announced by the prophet Nahum. See especially Nah. iii. 7. So the Vulgate has, "The destruction of Nineveh is at hand, for the word of the Lord must be fulfilled." The warning is repeated below (ver. 8.). The power of Nineveh was greatly weakened by the invasion of the Medes; but the destruction of the city was due to the revolt of the Babylonian general Nabopolassar from the Assyrian monarch Sardanapalus, or Asshur-bani-pal, which led to the transference of the empire of the East to Babylon, and to the Chaldean dynasty of Nebuchadnezzar.

"Our brethren." The remnant of the ten tribes that were left in the land, and were joined to Judah and Benjamin.

5. "A temple, but not like to the first." The Greek text speaks of a partial restoration of the city and Temple in the days of Cyrus, to be followed by a more perfect and glorious restoration at a later time, probably the time of the advent of the Messiah, whose appearance is connected with the rebuilding of the Temple in the prophecy of Daniel. The Hebrew adds to this, that "when the first age is ended, they shall go again into a very grievous captivity." "Then the blessed and holy One shall remember them, and gather them from the four quarters of the world. Then the holy city Jerusalem shall be restored with a fair and splendid structure. The Temple also itself shall be erected in great magnificence, such as shall not be destroyed nor perish for ever and ever, as the prophets have foretold." So in the Gospel (St. Luke xi. 24.), "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." A succession of "ages" in the

6 And all nations shall turn, and fear the Lord God truly, and shall bury their idols.

7 So shall all nations praise the Lord, and his people shall confess God, and the Lord shall exalt his people; and all those which love the Lord God in truth and justice shall rejoice, shewing mercy to our brethren.

8 And now, my son, depart out of Nineve, because that those things which the prophet Jonas spake shall surely come to pass.

9 But keep thou the law and the commandments, and shew thyself merciful and just, that it may go well with thee.

10 And bury me decently, and thy mother with me; but tarry no longer at Nineve. Remember, my son, how Aman handled Achiacharus that brought

world's history was denoted by the gold, silver, brass, and iron in the vision of the image (Dan. ii.). So in the temporal affairs of the Jewish nation, there has been a continual hope that the "age" of dispersion would be followed by an "age" of glory and restoration (see on Baruch iv. 37.); although Christians are assured that in God's spiritual dispensation of grace this is "the last time" (1 John ii. 18. Gal. i. 8.).

6. "All nations." In the Vulgate, "the Gentiles shall leave their idols, and shall come into Jerusalem, and shall dwell in it." See on Wisd. xiv. 13. Baruch vi. 51. It was foretold in Zech. ii. 10—12, and elsewhere, that the restoration of Jerusalem would cause many nations to seek the true God. "The heathen shall fear Thy Name, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory, when the Lord shall build up Zion" (Ps. cii. 13—16.).

7. "Truth and justice." The effect of the return of God's favour and presence would be seen in the works of righteousness, almsgiving, and kindness by which they should show their love and gratitude for all His benefits (Ps. lxxxv. 9—11. Is. xxxii. 17. Zech. viii. 16, 19.).

8. "Depart out of Nineve." In the Vulgate, "Direct your steps to depart hence, for I see that its iniquity will bring it to destruction." Here the second Hebrew Version of the story ends.

9. "Merciful." In the Greek, "a lover of almsdeeds," a word not found elsewhere.

10. "Thy mother with me." In the Vulgate, "in one grave," as above, iv. 4.

"Remember, my son," &c. This is omitted in the Vulgate. The Syriac has: "In Nineveh there are many evildoers. For there Ahab made an evil return to Achiacharus who brought up Tobit. For he misguided him, so that he should not possess the land. But Ahab entered into darkness, whilst Achiacharus escaped into the light out of

him up, how out of light he brought him into darkness, and how he rewarded him again: yet Achia-
 charus was ² saved, but the other had his reward: ² Or, *preserved.*
 for he went down into darkness. ³ Manasses gave ³ Junius
 alms, and escaped the snares of death ⁴ which they *readeth,*
 had set for him: but Aman fell into the snare, and ⁴ Rom. *which*
 perished. *he had set.*

11 Wherefore now, my son, consider what alms
 doeth, and how righteousness doth deliver. When
 he had said these things, he gave up the ghost in
 the bed, being an hundred and eight and fifty years
 old; and ⁵ he buried him honourably. ⁵ Or, *they.*

12 And when Anna his mother was dead, he
 buried her with his father. But Tobias departed
 with his wife and children to Ecbatane to Raguel
 his father in law,

13 where he became old with honour, and he
 buried his father and mother in law honourably,
 and he ⁶ inherited their substance, and his father ⁶ Or, *possessed.*
 Tobit's.

“the snare which Ahab had laid for him, and entered into possession
 “of the land.” The Greek speaks of two victims of the treachery of
 Aman or Ahab, the second, named Manasses, having escaped through
 his piety and almsgiving. The name “Aman” is supposed to have
 been introduced from the Book of Esther, through the carelessness of
 a transcriber of the Greek.

11. “He gave up the ghost.” In Nineveh, the land of his exile;
 and in assured faith in God’s promises, though he did not live to see
 their fulfilment. See Gen. xlix. 18. Heb. xi. 13. The Syriac and
 Vulgate make his age to have been 102 years.

12. “Ecbatane.” It is probable that the city and district of Ecbatane
 had suffered from wars and desolation in the meantime (Judith i. 14,
 15.). Thus Tobias would have been preserved by God’s providence,
 (1.) from the troubles in Media by his abode in Nineveh, and
 (2.) from the ruin of Nineveh by his removal to Ecbatane. So from
 age to age the warnings of God’s prophets have been a protection
 to God’s people, and a means of their preservation. See St. Matt. xxiv.
 15—18.

13. “Where he became old.” In the Vulgate: “He found them
 “in health in a good old age, and he took care of them, and he closed
 “their eyes; and all the inheritance of Raguel’s house came to him,
 “and he saw his children’s children to the fifth generation. And
 “after he had lived ninety and nine years in the fear of the Lord,
 “with joy they buried him.” In the Syriac, his age is described as
 107 years.

TOBIT, XIV.

14 And he died at Ecbatane in Media, being an hundred and seven and twenty years old.

15 But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineve, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus: and before his death he rejoiced over Nineve.

15. "Assuerus." Probably "Asdahag," prince of the Medes, and father-in-law to Nebuchadnezzar, who assisted him in his wars with Egypt and Nineveh (Pusey, *Introd. to Nahum*). The Vulgate omits this, and concludes thus: "and all his kindred, and all his generation, continued in good life, and in holy conversation, so that they were acceptable both to God and to men, and to all that dwelt in the land."

JUDITH.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of Judith has a more distinctly apocryphal character than Tobit. It is doubtful whether the story has any historical basis; and even if it can be considered as a sacred drama founded upon fact, the events to which it relates are mingled with improbable circumstances, and disguised by a fanciful use of proper names both of persons and places, so that it is impossible to distinguish between these apocryphal additions and the residue of historical scenes and events which would be left after their removal.

The story describes the Jewish people (1.) as recently returned from captivity, and occupying the Temple and city of Jerusalem, (2.) at a time when the regal power was in abeyance and the control of affairs was left to the High Priest and Sanhedrin; (3.) in great peril and distress from the invasion of an overwhelming host of enemies, but obtaining a deliverance through the courage and devotion of Judith, which was followed by a long period of tranquillity. These circumstances would point to a period of time subsequent to the Babylonish Captivity. On the other hand, the invaders are described as Assyrians; and the conquest of Media appears also to belong to an earlier period, and to refer to the wars which Esarhaddon and his successors carried on with the first two independent kings of the Medes, who are called by Herodotus "Deioces" and "Phraortes." Hence authors who have upheld the historical truth of the main features of the narrative, have supposed that Nebuchodonosor is another name for one of the successors of Esarhaddon on the throne of Nineveh, and that Arphaxad is either the Deioces or the Phraortes of Herodotus. An ancient Greek author, Claudius Ptolemæus, constructed a "Canon" or list of kings, with dates, and he places next to Esarhaddon a king named Saosduchêos; and it is to this monarch that the acts of Nebuchodonosor have been ascribed by several authors. But some doubt rests upon the reign of this Saosduchêos; recent discoveries tending to show that Esarhaddon's next successor was Sardanapalus II., or Asshur-bani-pal, in whose time Nineveh fell before the combined forces of the Medes and the revolted Babylonian general Nabopolassar. See Tobit xiv. 15. "The invasion of Assyria by Phraortes, which Herodotus relates, is held on good grounds to be a later history of a rebellion against Darius Hystaspes, adapted to times before the

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"Medes became one nation" (Pusey, *Introduction to Nahum*). Under Sargon and Shalmanezar the subjection of the Medes to Assyria appears in the settlement of the ten tribes in their cities (*Ib.*). Hence there is a difficulty in assigning a date to the defeat of Arphaxad, as related in Judith; such a defeat of the Medes having recurred at various times during their long struggle for independence in their mountain strongholds. The captivity of Manasseh, King of Judah, seems to have been a personal capture, not shared by the other princes of Judah (*Ib.*). It was followed by a restoration of Manasseh to his throne, as a trusted tributary of Esarhaddon, and as a frontier power against Egypt (*Ib.*). This renders it highly improbable that this restoration should be followed by such an invasion as that of Holofernes, either in the reign of Manasseh or in the younger days of Josiah. Nor does the return of Manasseh from captivity correspond to the description of the state of the Jews in Judith. It is, then, impossible to arrive at any certainty as to the period of Jewish history which the author had in view. He seems to have taken some old tradition as his basis, and to have added names and circumstances borrowed from different periods of history. The authenticity of the story is defended by Dr. Prideaux, *Connexions*, Vol. I., p. 40, and by the Rev. George Williams, *Holy City*, Vol. I., p. 44. The learned Grotius supposed it to be a pure allegory, and that the power of the great oppressor of the Jews, Antiochus Epiphanes, was indicated under the disguise of Holofernes. The parallels between Judith and the Books of Maccabees make it probable that they belong to the same period. The author's object was to encourage the Jews in a time of great affliction and peril; to move them to trust in God, and to seek His help by prayer and fasting, by the example of a pious and courageous woman, to whose faith a deliverance had been granted to their nation under like circumstances.

The Book of Judith is extant in Greek, Latin, and Syriac. The Latin Version was founded upon an old Chaldee copy which is lost. It differs considerably from the Greek.

The Book of Judith is quoted in the Homilies as illustrating the use of fasting, and of the celebration of festivals: "Judith and all the people of Bethulia had the Bridegroom with them, when God had, by the hand of a woman, slain Holofernes, the grand captain of the Assyrians' host."

JUDITH, I.

CHAPTER I.

2 *Arphaxad doth fortify Ecbatane. 5 Nabuchodonosor maketh war against him, 7 and craveth aid. 12 He threateneth those that would not aid him, 15 and killeth Arphaxad, 16 and returneth to Nineve.*

IN the twelfth year of the reign of Nabuchodonosor, who reigned in Nineve, the great city ; in the days of Arphaxad, which reigned over the Medes in Ecbatane,

2 and built in Ecbatane walls round about of stones hewn three cubits broad and six cubits long, and made the height of the wall seventy cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits :

3 and set the towers thereof upon the gates of it, an hundred cubits *high*, and the breadth thereof in the foundation threescore cubits :

4 and he made the gates thereof, even gates that were raised to the height of seventy cubits, and the breadth of them was forty cubits, for the going forth of his mighty armies, and for the setting in array of his footmen :

5 even in those days king Nabuchodonosor made

CHAPTER I.

1. Under the name "**Nabuchodonosor**" the author has been thought to refer to one of the later kings of Assyria ; perhaps the monarch called Saosduchēos in the "Canon" or chronological list of ancient kings compiled by Claudius Ptolemæus. Arphaxad would then represent the first independent king of the Medes, called Deioeces by Herodotus. But his defeat and death (below, ver. 15.), resemble Herodotus' account of Phraortes, the successor of Deioeces. In the Vulgate the book commences thus : "Now Arphaxad, King of the Medes, had brought many nations "under his dominion, and he built a very strong city, which he called "Ecbatana." According to Josephus, *Ecbatana* was afterwards fortified by Daniel under Darius, and it was there that the decree of Cyrus was found, "at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the "Medes" (Ezra vi. 1, 2, &c.).

2. "**Walls.**" Ecbatana was originally founded by Semiramis. Deioeces, the first independent king of the Medes, fortified it by the erection of seven concentric walls round a conical hill or stronghold, the inner wall in each case being higher than the outer one by the battlements only, which were painted with various colours.

4. "**For the going forth.**" His object being not only to strengthen his defences, but to make a display of his power and skill in war. So Dan. iv. 30, and the Vulgate here : "He gloried as a mighty one in "the force of his army and the glory of his chariots."

5. Nabuchodonosor's jealousy was aroused by the growing power of Arphaxad, and he invaded his kingdom. Ragau is probably the same place as "Rages" in the Book of Tobit.

war with king Arphaxad in the great plain, which is the plain in the borders of Ragau.

6 And there came unto him all they that dwelt in the hill country, and all that dwelt by Euphrates, and Tigris, and Hydaspes, and the plain of Arioch the king of the Elymeans, and very many nations of the sons of Chelod, assembled themselves to the battle.

7 Then Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians sent unto all that dwelt in Persia, and to all that dwelt westward, and to those that dwelt in Cilicia, and Damascus, and Libanus, and Antilibanus, and to all that dwelt upon the sea coast,

8 and to those among the nations that were of Carmel, and Galaad, and the higher Galilee, and the great plain of Esdrelom,

9 and to all that were in Samaria and the cities thereof, and beyond Jordan unto Jerusalem, and Betane, and Chellus, and Kades, and the river of Egypt, and Taphnes, and Ramesse, and all the land of Gesem,

10 until ye come beyond Tanis and Memphis, and to all the inhabitants of Egypt, until ye come to the borders of Ethiopia.

11 But all the inhabitants of the land made light of the commandment of Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians, neither went they with him to the battle; for they were not afraid of him: yea, he

6. These were the Eastern nations over whom the power of Nineveh extended, inhabitants of the plains of Mesopotamia, of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and eastward to the Hydaspes or Choaspes. This would include Ellasar or Larissa, the kingdom over which Arioch reigned of old (Gen. xiv. 1.), and the "sons of Chelod," or Chaldeans.

7—10. The Western nations, from whom the Assyrians claimed tribute and allegiance; even in the time of Abraham this claim made by the Kings of the East had been the cause of war (Gen. xiv. 1—3.), and it was repeatedly asserted by the Assyrian monarchy in the times of the Kings of Israel and Judah. The great plain of Esdrelom, or Esdraelon, is mentioned below, iii. 9; iv. 6. It is the level part of Palestine, between the mountains of Galilee and Carmel on the North, and the ridges of Samaria on the South. It is also called the "valley of Jezreel." Megiddon, in the lower part of the plain, was the scene of the battles in Judges v. and 2 Chr. xxxv. "Betane" and "Chellus" seem to have been places South of Jerusalem, towards Kadesh and the desert.

11. These nations sent back the Assyrian envoys "empty and without

was before them as one man, and they sent away his ambassadors from them without effect, and with disgrace.

12 Therefore Nabuchodonosor was very angry with all this country, and sware by his throne and kingdom, that he would surely be avenged upon all those coasts of Cilicia, and Damascus, and Syria, and that he would slay with the sword all the inhabitants of the land of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and all Judea, and all that were in Egypt, till ye come to the borders of the two seas.

13 Then he marched in battle array with his power against king Arphaxad in the seventeenth year, and he prevailed in his battle: for he overthrew all the power of Arphaxad, and all his horsemen, and all his chariots,

14 and became lord of his cities, and came unto Ecbatane, and took the towers, and spoiled the streets thereof, and turned the beauty thereof into shame.

15 He took also Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragau, and smote him through with his darts, and destroyed him utterly that day.

16 So he returned afterward to Nineve, both he and all his company of sundry nations, being a very great multitude of men of war, and there he took his ease, and banqueted, both he and his army, an hundred and twenty days.

“honour,” instead of giving them the “presents,” which were the usual form of tribute demanded of subject nations (2 Kin. xviii. 31.). The Egyptians were strong enough to defy Nineveh by their own strength. The other nations would trust in the alliance of Egypt (Is. xxx. 1—4; xxxi. 1; xxxvi. 6. Ezek. xvii. 15.).

12. The two seas are: (1.) the Mediterranean, the Great Sea or uttermost sea (Num. xxxiv. 6, 7.); and (2.) the Red Sea, the Sea of Suph, or the Arabian Gulf. These were the utmost limits to which the Assyrian claim of dominion extended. See Nahum iii. 7, 8.

14. “The beauty.” The city in whose strength and splendour they had gloried “was turned into shame,” or an occasion of reproach. See 1 Kin. ix. 7, 8. Hos. iv. 7.

15. “He took Arphaxad,” &c. Herodotus (Book I., cap. 102.), mentions the defeat and death of Phraortes, who is said to have succeeded Deioces, the first independent king of the Medes. It is uncertain whether the author of the Book of Judith had in his mind this event, or some later occurrence in the history of the Medes. The events described here and in ver. 16 are omitted in the Vulgate.

JUDITH, II.

CHAPTER II.

4 Holofernes is appointed general, 11 and charged to spare none that will not yield. 15 His army and provision. 23 The places which he won and wasted as he went.

AND in the eighteenth year, the two and twentieth day of the first month, there was talk in the house of Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians, that he should, as he said, avenge himself on all the earth.

2 So he called unto him all his officers, and all his nobles, and communicated with them his secret counsel, and ^a concluded the afflicting of the whole earth out of his own mouth.

^a 1 Sam. 20. 7.
& 25. 17.

3 Then they decreed to destroy all flesh, that did not obey the commandment of his mouth.

4 And when he had ended his counsel, Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians called Holofernes the chief captain of his army, which was ² next unto him, and said unto him,

² Gr. *second man.*

5 Thus saith the great king, the lord of the whole earth, Behold, thou shalt go forth from my presence, and take with thee men that trust in their own

CHAPTER II.

1. "In the eighteenth year." Perhaps of Arphaxad's reign over the Medes; as the Vulgate calls it, "the thirteenth year of the reign of "Nebuchodonosor."

"There was talk;" or "the word was given out," the war being decreed or declared, and not merely anticipated by rumour.

2. "His secret counsel." Literally, "the mystery of his will," which was not to be divulged until he knew that he had sufficient force at his command for so great an undertaking (Prov. xx. 18. St. Luke xiv. 31.).

4—13. The King's Charge to Holofernes.

The general was to proceed with an overwhelming host to surprise and overpower the cities of the West; and then the king himself would follow (ver. 7.). The name "Holofernes," and the demand of "earth and water," seem to belong to the Persian rather than the Assyrian nation: both names and circumstances are thus borrowed from later times to embellish the narrative. The reply of the Scythians to Darius Hystaspes, by sending him a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows, is well known, as denoting defiance, and not the surrender of the productions of their country. This mention of "earth and water" is omitted in the Vulgate. The mustering of enormous hosts to crush and surprise an enemy, with all its accompanying reckless waste of human life, was common to the Assyrian and Persian monarchies. See 2 Kin. xviii. 17; xix. 35. Death was decreed upon all who resisted, whilst those who

JUDITH, II.

strength, of footmen an hundred and twenty thousand; and the number of horses with their riders twelve thousand.

6 And thou shalt go against all the west country, because they disobeyed my commandment.

7 And thou shalt declare unto them, that they prepare for me ²earth and water: for I will go forth in my wrath against them, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of mine army, and I will give them for a spoil unto them:

8 so that their slain shall fill their valleys and brooks, and the river shall be filled with their dead, till it overflow:

9 and I will lead them captives to the utmost parts of all the earth.

10 Thou therefore shalt go forth, and take beforehand for me all their coasts: and if they will yield themselves unto thee, thou shalt reserve them for me till the day of their punishment.

11 But concerning them that rebel, let not thine eye spare them; but put them to the slaughter, and spoil them wheresoever thou goest.

12 For as I live, and by the power of my kingdom, whatsoever I have spoken, that will I do by mine hand.

13 And take thou heed that thou transgress none of the commandments of thy lord, but accomplish them fully, as I have commanded thee, and defer not to do them.

14 Then Holofernes went forth from the presence of his lord, and called all the governors and captains, and the officers of the army of Assur;

15 and he mustered the chosen men for the battle, as his lord had commanded him, unto an hundred and twenty thousand, and twelve thousand archers on horseback;

16 and he ranged them, as a great army is ordered for the war.

² After the manner of the kings of Persia, to whom earth and water was wont to be given, to acknowledge that they were lords of land and sea, *Herodotus.*

yielded and made their submission were allowed an alternative of captivity, bondage, or tribute; such being the custom in ancient warfare (Deut. xx. 10—15.).

JUDITH, II.

17 And he took camels and asses for their carriages, a very great number; and sheep and oxen and goats without number for their provision:

18 and plenty of victual for every man of the army, and very much gold and silver out of the king's house.

19 Then he went forth and all his power to go before king Nabuchodonosor in the voyage, and to cover all the face of the earth westward with their chariots, and horsemen, and their chosen footmen.

20 A great number also of sundry countries came with them like locusts, and like the sand of the earth: for the multitude was without number.

21 And they went forth of Nineve three days' journey toward the plain of Bectileth, and pitched from Bectileth near the mountain which is at the left hand of the upper Cilicia.

22 Then he took all his army, his footmen, and horsemen, and chariots, and went from thence into the hill country;

23 and destroyed Phud and Lud, and spoiled all the children of Rassas, and the children of Ismael, which were toward the wilderness at the south of the land of the Chellians.

24 Then he went over Euphrates, and went through Mesopotamia, and destroyed all the high

18. "Plenty of victual." In the Vulgate, "He appointed corn to be prepared out of all Syria in his passage." He levied contributions from Mesopotamia and Syria, the countries through which his march lay.

20. "A number of sundry countries." Literally, "a mixed company or multitude," as in i. 16. The armies of Nineveh are compared to locusts in Nah. iii. 15, 17: "Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers," spreading desolation far and wide, and then suddenly disappearing.

21. Their march was in a Westerly direction to "the plain of Bectileth," or Bekaa, which lies between the range of Lebanon and "the great mountains of Ange which are on the left of Cilicia." Here was the valley of the Orontes, in which Antioch afterwards stood.

23. "Phud and Lud" are mentioned with Persia in Ezek. xxvii. 10. Phut was probably an African tribe; but here the name seems to be applied to some tribe of Northern Syria or Cilicia; and "the children of Rassas" gave their name to Rhosus on the Gulf of Issus.

24—27. He carried his work of devastation over the countries that lay to the North and East of Palestine, before he threatened Judea itself.

JUDITH, III.

cities that were upon the river Arbonai, till ye come to the sea.

25 And he took the borders of Cilicia, and killed all that resisted him, and came to the borders of Japheth, which were toward the south, over against Arabia.

26 He compassed also all the children of Madian, and burned up their tabernacles, and spoiled their sheepcotes.

27 Then he went down into the plain of Damascus in the time of wheat harvest, and burnt up all their fields, and destroyed their flocks and herds, also he spoiled their cities, and utterly wasted their countries, and smote all their young men with the edge of the sword.

28 Therefore the fear and dread of him fell upon all the inhabitants of the sea coasts, which were in Sidon and Tyrus, and them that dwelt in Sur and Ocina, and all that dwelt in Jemnaan; and they that dwelt in Azotus and Ascalon feared him greatly.

CHAPTER III.

1 They of the sea coasts intreat for peace. 7 Holofernes is received there: 8 yet he destroyeth their gods, that they might worship only Nabuchodonosor. 9 He cometh near to Judea.

SO they sent ambassadors unto him to treat of peace, saying,

2 Behold, we the servants of Nabuchodonosor the great king lie before thee; use us as shall be good in thy sight.

3 Behold, our houses, and all our places, and all

The "torrent of Abronas" is supposed to have been one of the streams that flow down from Lebanon into the sea. But in the Vulgate it is called "the torrent of Mambre," and hence some identify "Japheth" with "Japho" (Josh. xix. 46.), or Joppa, on the coast of Palestine.

28. The places mentioned in this verse (omitted in the Vulgate) were probably on the sea coast of Palestine. The panic caused by an Assyrian invasion is vividly described in Is. x. 13, 14, 23—32.

CHAPTER III.

1. According to the Vulgate, these ambassadors came from all parts of the invaded district, from Mesopotamia, Libya, and Cilicia, and not merely from the sea coast of Palestine. In Acts xii. 20, it is the maritime people who make their submission to Herod, and desire peace.

our fields of wheat, and flocks, and herds, and all the lodges of our tents, lie before thy face; use them as it pleaseth thee.

4 Behold, even our cities and the inhabitants thereof are thy servants; come and deal with them as seemeth good unto thee.

5 So the men came to Holofernes, and declared unto him after this manner.

6 Then came he down toward the sea coast, both he and his army, and set garrisons in the high cities, and took out of them chosen men for aid.

7 So they and all the country round about received them with garlands, with dances, and with timbrels.

8 Yet he did cast down their frontiers, and cut down their groves: for he had decreed to destroy all the gods of the land, that all nations should worship Nabuchodonosor only, and that all tongues and tribes should call upon him as god.

9 Also he came over against ² Esdraelon near unto ³ Judea, over against the ⁴ great strait of Judea.

² Or,
Esdrelom.
³ Or, Dotea,
Dothan,
Junius.
Gen. 37. 17.
⁴ Gr. great
saw.

4. "Come and deal with them." In the Vulgate: "Come to us as a peaceable lord, and use our service as it shall please thee." Compare Hezekiah's submission, in 2 Kin. xviii. 14.

6. "Then came he down" from the mountains (*Vulgate*); that is, from the hilly country of Lebanon, or the neighbourhood of Damascus.

7. "With garlands." Perhaps these were golden crowns, or presents of money, offered in token of their submission. Such were the "crown taxes," in 1 Macc. x. 29; xi. 35; xiii. 39. This mention of crowns or garlands is an instance of the ideas borrowed from later times which occur in the book. "But though they did these things, they could not for all that mitigate the fierceness of his heart" (*Vulgate*).

8. It was the boast of the Assyrians that they overcame and destroyed the gods whom their enemies worshipped or regarded as their protectors. See Is. xxxvii. 18, 19; xxxvi. 18—20; and in their pride of conquest, their kings offered themselves as objects of worship to the nations whom they subjugated. Compare the pride of the prince of Tyre (Ezek. xxviii. 2, 3.); of Antiochus (2 Macc. ix. 12.); or of Antichrist (2 Thess. ii. 4.).

9. This verse is not in the Vulgate. In the Greek: "He came over against Esdrelon, near to Dotæa, which is opposite the great saw of "Judæa." The "saw" was, perhaps, the name of a "sierra," or serrated mountain ridge. Similarly, an insulated rock is called a "tooth," in 1 Sam. xiv. 4. Dotæa was probably Dothan, or Dothaim, which is mentioned below (iv. 6; vii. 3, 18; viii. 3.); also in the history of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 17.), and Elisha (2 Kin. vi. 13.).

JUDITH, IV.

10 And he pitched between Geba and Scythopolis, and there he tarried a whole month, that he might gather together all the carriages of his army.

CHAPTER IV.

2 The Jews are afraid of Holofernes, 5 and fortify the hills. 6 They of Bethulia take charge of the passages. 9 All Israel fall to fasting and prayer.

NOW the children of Israel, that dwelt in Judea, heard all that Holofernes the chief captain of Nabuchodonosor king of the Assyrians had done to the nations, and after what manner he had spoiled all their temples, and brought them to nought.

2 Therefore they were exceedingly afraid of him, and were troubled for Jerusalem, and for the temple of the Lord their God :

3 for they were newly returned from the captivity, and all the people ² of Judea were lately gathered ^{2 Or, out of Judea.} together : and the vessels, and the altar, and the house, were sanctified after the profanation.

10. "Geba" was in the tribe of Benjamin, near the pass of Michmash (1 Sam. xiii. 3.).

"Scythopolis" was originally called Bethshean (Judg. i. 27.); but it was known as the "city of the Scythians" in the time of the Maccabees (2 Macc. xii. 29.). It is supposed that some of the Scythians who invaded Syria and Egypt about the year B.C. 600, may have formed a settlement here.

"The carriages." The word is used for "spoil," or "plunder," in Deut. xx. 14; but here, and in ii. 17, it signifies the baggage of the army, which was transported by camels, asses, and other beasts of burden. Jerusalem, from its strong, impregnable position, was usually reserved for attack by invaders until the other fenced cities of Judah had been reduced. See 2 Kin. xviii. 13; xix. 8. The description of the march of Holofernes is different in the Vulgate: "He came to the Idumæans, in the land of Gabaa, and took possession of their cities, and stayed there for thirty days, and commanded all the troops of his army to be united."

CHAPTER IV.

1. "Their temples." Or, "their coasts," according to another reading of the text.

2. "For the temple." Compare 2 Macc. xi. 2, 3.

3. "From the captivity." Compare v. 19, where the author speaks of the Temple as having been restored and rebuilt. The passage may be compared with the account of the sanctification of the holy place and its vessels by Judas Maccabeus (1 Macc. iv. 36--60.). The fortifying of the strongholds to the North of Jerusalem, and towards Jericho, is also mentioned in the history of the wars of the Maccabees (1 Macc. ix. 50--52.); but it is there the act of the enemies and oppressors of the Jews.

JUDITH, IV.

4 Therefore they sent into all the coasts of Samaria, and the villages, and to Bethoron, and Belmen, and Jericho, and to Choba, and Esora, and to the valley of Salem :

5 and possessed themselves beforehand of all the tops of the high mountains, and fortified the villages that were in them, and laid up victuals for the provision of war : for their fields were of late reaped.

6 Also Joacim the high priest, which was in those days in Jerusalem, wrote to them that dwelt in Bethulia, and Betomestham, which is over against ² Esdraelon toward the ³ open country, near to Dothaim,

² Or, *Esdreloom.*

³ Or, *plain.*

7 charging them to keep the passages of the hill country : for by them there was an entrance into Judea, and it was easy to stop them that would come up, because the passage was strait, ⁴ for two men at the most.

⁴ Or, *two against all.*

8 And the children of Israel did as Joacim the high priest had commanded them, with the ⁵ ancients of all the people of Israel, which dwelt at Jerusalem.

⁵ Or, *governors.*

9 Then every man of Israel cried to God with

6. "Joacim the high priest." In the Vulgate he is called "Eliakim." The author seems to have had in view a period of the history when the affairs of the nation were entrusted to the High Priest and Sanhedrin, the regal authority being in abeyance. This has led to the conjecture that Joacim might be Hilkiah, who was High Priest during Josiah's minority. See on viii. 18. But others have supposed that the names Joacim (Jehovah shall arise) and Eliakim (God shall arise) were only chosen to express the hope of Divine aid which animated the Jews in their extreme peril. Compare Ps. lxxviii. 1.

"Bethulia, and Betomestham." The latter name may signify "the place of ambush, or lying in wait;" but Bethulia, which is the scene of the chief events of the Book of Judith, is described so minutely, that it is probably some stronghold in the region of Dothan, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon. It has been conjectured to be the modern "Sanur," a rocky hill with some ruins upon it. Conder identifies it with Mithilia.

7. "The mountain barrier of Samaria, to the South of the great plain of Esdraelon, offers but few passes practicable for a large army, with its baggage and stores, and the most commodious of these was guarded by the strong city of Bethulia, which opposed an effectual check to the further progress of the invading army" (*Williams*). In this district there was the narrow passage of Michmash, the scene of the victory obtained by Jonathan over the Philistines (1 Sam. xiv. 5—14.).

9. "Cried to God." Compare 2 Macc. xi. 6.

JUDITH, IV.

great fervency, and with great vehemency did they humble their souls :

10 both they, and their wives, and their children, and their cattle; and every stranger and hireling, and their servants bought with money, put sackcloth upon their loins.

11 Thus every man and woman, and the little children, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, fell before the temple, and cast ashes upon their heads, and spread out their sackcloth before the face of the Lord: also they put sackcloth about the altar,

12 and cried to the God of Israel all with one consent earnestly, that he would not give their children for a prey, and their wives for a spoil, and the cities of their inheritance to destruction, and the sanctuary to profanation and reproach, and for the nations to rejoice at.

13 So God heard their prayers, and looked upon their afflictions: for the people fasted many days in all Judea and Jerusalem before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty.

11. The Vulgate has: "The priests put on haircloths, and they caused "the little children to lie prostrate before the Temple of the Lord." So in Joel ii. 16, even the infants and sucklings have a share in the humiliation. In the time of Jehoshaphat, "all Judah stood before the "Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children" (2 Chr. xx. 13.). It might be inferred from Jonah iv. 11, that God was especially moved to pity by the cries of the little children, who could not discern between their right hand and their left (*Pusey*). They spread out their sackcloth, like Rizpah, on the rock (2 Sam. xxi. 10.).

12. "For the nations to rejoice at." Or, "to be an object of scorn "or derision to the heathen." The same word occurs in Eccclus. vi. 4; xviii. 31; xlii. 11, in the sense of a "laughingstock." The whole passage is based upon Joel ii. 15—17.

13. The Vulgate has, instead of this verse, the following: "Then "Eliakim, the High Priest of the Lord, went about all Israel, and spoke "to them, saying, Know ye that the Lord will hear your prayers, if ye "continue with perseverance in fastings and prayers in the sight of the "Lord. Remember Moses, the servant of the Lord, who overcame Amalek, "that trusted in his own strength and in his own power, and in his army, "and in his shields, and in his chariots, not by fighting with the sword, "but by holy prayers. So shall all the enemies of Israel be, if you "persevere in this work which you have begun." The reference is to Exod. xvii. 12. The passage in the Greek text may be taken from Ps. cvi. 44.

JUDITH, V.

14 And Joacim the high priest, and all the priests that stood before the Lord, and they which ministered unto the Lord, had their loins girt with sackcloth, and offered the daily burnt offerings, with the vows and free gifts of the people,

15 and had ashes on their mitres, and cried unto the Lord with all their power, that he would look upon all the house of Israel graciously.

CHAPTER V.

5 Achior telleth Holofernes what the Jews are, 8 and what their God had done for them; 21 and adviseth not to meddle with them. 22 All that heard him were offended at him.

THEN was it declared to Holofernes, the chief captain of the army of Assur, that the children of Israel had prepared for war, and had shut up the passages of the hill country, and had fortified² all the tops of the high hills, and had laid impediments in the champaign countries:

² Gr.
all the top.

2 wherewith he was very angry, and called all the princes of Moab, and the captains of Ammon, and all the governors of the sea coast,

3 and he said unto them, Tell me now, ye sons of Chanaan, who this people is, that dwelleth in the

14. Compare the account of the humiliation of the Jews in the time of the Maccabees (1 Macc. iii. 44—48.); and the fasting of Mordecai and the Jews when Haman decreed their destruction (Esth. iv. 1—3; xiv. [Apocr.] 1, 2.).

15. "On their mitres." The tiara, or sacred covering of the head, as described in Exod. xxviii. 4, 36, 37.

CHAPTER V.

1. "Impediments." These were probably "snares," "traps," or "pitfalls," which were made in the plains or valleys to embarrass the enemy in his march. The digging of pits is often mentioned in the Psalms. See Ps. ix. 15; xxxv. 7; cxl. 5; cxli. 9. In the campaign in Gen. xiv. 8—10, the "wells of asphalt" were relied upon as a means of embarrassing the invaders.

3. "Sons of Chanaan." Moab and Ammon might be so described, as dwellers on the borders of the land of Canaan, though not Canaanites by descent. The Assyrians had already carried on war with the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, so that it seems improbable that Holofernes would be totally ignorant of the Jewish nation and its past history. His enquiry would rather be as to their present strength and resources for the war.

JUDITH, V.

hill country, and what are the cities that they inhabit, and what is the multitude of their army, and wherein is their power and strength, and what king is set over them, or captain of their army;

4 and why have they determined not to come and meet me, more than all the inhabitants of the west.

5 ^a Then said Achior, the captain of all the sons ^{a ch. 6. 5. & 11. 9.} of Ammon, Let my lord now hear a word from the mouth of thy servant, and I will declare unto thee the truth concerning this people, which dwelleth near thee, and inhabiteth the hill countries: and there shall no lie come out of the mouth of thy servant.

6 This people are descended of the Chaldeans:

7 ^b and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, ^{b Gen. 11. 31.} because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea.

8 For they ² left the way of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew: so they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days. ^{2 Or, went out of.}

9 Then ^c their God commanded them to depart ^{c Gen. 12. 1.} from the place where they sojourned, and to go into the land of Chanaan: where they dwelt, and were increased with gold and silver, and with very much cattle.

10 But when a famine covered all the land of Chanaan, ^d they went down into Egypt, and so- ^{d Gen. 46. 6.}

4. "Why have they determined," &c. Literally, "They have "turned their backs upon us," or "despised us;" and so the Vulgate.

6, 7. "Ur of the Chaldees" was the original abode of Terah and his sons, Abraham, Nahor, and Haran. See Gen. xi. 26, 31. Here they served other gods (Josh. xxiv. 2, 14.). But, at the call of God, Abraham forsook his country and kindred, and renounced the idols which they worshipped.

8. "They cast them out." The tradition of the Jews was, that Abraham fled to Charran from the persecution of his idolatrous countrymen. "Forsaking the ceremonies of their fathers, which consisted in "the worship of many gods, they worshipped one God of heaven" (Vulgate).

10. "Covered." The famine prevailed (Gen. xli. 57.), no country being exempt from it.

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- ^e Ex. 1. 7. journed there, while they were nourished, ^eand became there a great multitude, so that one could not number their nation.
- ^f Ex. 1. 8,—
14. 11 ^fTherefore the king of Egypt rose up against them, and dealt subtilly with them, and brought them low with labouring in brick, and made them slaves.
- ^g Ex. 2. 23. 12 ^gThen they cried unto their God, and ^hhe
^h Ex. 7, & 8, smote all the land of Egypt with incurable plagues:
& 9, & 10, so the ⁱEgyptians cast them out of their sight.
& 12. 13 And ^kGod dried the Red sea before them,
ⁱ Ex. 12. 31, 14 and ^lbrought them ²to mount Sina, and
^k Ex. 14. 21. ^mCades-Barne, and cast forth all that dwelt in the
^l Ex. 19. 1. wilderness.
² Gr. into the way of the wilderness of Sina. 15 ⁿSo they dwelt in the land of the Amorites,
^m Num. 20. 1. and they destroyed by their strength all them of
ⁿ Num. 21. 24, 25. Esebon, and ^opassing over Jordan they possessed
^o Josh. 3. 16. all the hill country.
- ^p Josh. 12. 8. 16 ^pAnd they cast forth before them the Chanaanite, the Pherezite, the Jebusite, and the Sy-

“And sojourned there.” The Vulgate adds, “four hundred years.” See Exod. xii. 40.

11. “Dealt subtilly.” See Exod. i. 10. Acts vii. 19. It was a crafty expedient for using their labour and weakening them, without attempting to destroy them.

“In brick.” The Vulgate adds, “in the building of his cities” (Exod. i. 11.). See also Deut. iv. 20. Ps. lxxxi. 6.

12. “Incurable.” Literally, “plagues for which there was no cure.” The reference may be to the attempts of the magicians to find a remedy, or to exert similar powers. See on Wisd. xvii. 7.

13. “The Red sea.” The Vulgate adds several verses here,—on the drowning of the Egyptians, the healing of the waters of Marah, the manna, and the victorious career of the Israelites, until “they departed from the worship of the Lord their God.” On the other hand, the Vulgate omits vv. 14, 15, on the victories of the Israelites over Arad the Canaanite (Num. xxi. 1, &c.), and over Sihon and Og (Num. xxi. 24, 25.).

15. “The hill country” of Gilead and Bashan, which was allotted by Moses to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

16. “The Sychemite.” The Vulgate has, “the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Amorites,” as in Exod. xxxiii. 2. In the time of Jacob, the Shechemites were the tribe of Hivites who had Hamor for their chief. In later times, the name was given to a family of the tribe of Manasseh. Here the “Sychemites” may be put for the nations of Canaan who inhabited the central districts of the Holy Land (Num. xiii. 29.), or the region of Mount Ephraim (Josh. xvii. 15—18.).

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chemite, and all the Gergesites, and they dwelt in that country many days.

17 And whilst they sinned not before their God, they prospered, because the God that hateth iniquity was with them.

18 But ^a when they departed from the way which he appointed them, they were destroyed in many battles very sore, ^r and were led captives into a land that was not their's, and the temple of their God was cast to the ground, and their cities were taken by the enemies.

^a Judg. 2. 11.
& 3. 7, 8.

^r 2 Kin. 25.
9, 10, 11.

19 But ^s now are they returned to their God, and are come up from the places where they were scattered, and have possessed Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and ² are seated in the hill country; for it was desolate.

² Or, *have their dwellings.*

20 Now therefore, my lord and governor, if there be any error in this people, and they sin against their God, let us consider that this shall be their ruin, and let us go up, and we shall overcome them.

21 But if there be no iniquity in their nation, let my lord now pass by, lest their Lord defend them, and their God be for them, and we become a reproach before all the world.

22 And when Achior had finished these sayings, all the people standing round about the tent murmured, and the chief men of Holofernes, and all

18. "The temple of their God was cast to the ground." These words, which are omitted in the Vulgate, show that the author of the book must have had in his mind some later period of the history of the Jews, and not the reign of Manasseh or Josiah, to which the events here recorded have been commonly referred. See below, viii. 18—20.

20, 21. Achior here repeats the general belief of the Jewish nation throughout their generations: that all their reverses and calamities were due to the displeasure of God, provoked by their own unfaithfulness. In their Law temporal promises were annexed to obedience, and earthly calamities were threatened for disobedience. Yet experience proved that the righteous cause was often oppressed for a time, though God would not suffer wickedness to prevail in the end. See Ps. xliv. 17—19; cxxv. 1—3. The words of the prophet Azariah were, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; . . . "but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2 Chr. xv. 2.). Though the Jews were few in number, God was able to make them stronger than their enemies (Ps. lxxxi. 13, 14; xlvi. 1—6. Rom. viii. 31.).

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that dwelt by the sea side, and in Moab, spake that he should kill him.

23 For, *say they*, we will not be afraid of the face of the children of Israel: for, lo, it is a people that have no strength nor power ² for a strong battle.

² Gr. *against a mighty army.*

24 Now therefore, lord Holofernes, we will go up, and they shall be a prey to be devoured of all thine army.

CHAPTER VI.

3 *Holofernes despiseth God. 7 He threateneth Achior, and sendeth him away. 14 The Bethulians receive and hear him. 18 They fall to prayer, and comfort Achior.*

AND when the tumult of men that were about the council was ceased, Holofernes the chief captain of the army of Assur said unto Achior and all the Moabites before all the company of other nations,

2 And who art thou, Achior, and the hirelings of Ephraim, that thou hast prophesied among us as to day, and hast said, that we should not make war with the people of Israel, because their God will defend them? and who is God but Nabuchodonosor?

3 He will send his power, and will destroy them from the face of the earth, and their God shall not deliver them: but we his servants will destroy them as one man; for they are not able to sustain the power of our horses.

4 For with them we will tread them under foot,

23. "A people that have no strength." In the Vulgate, "men unarmed, and without strength, and without skill in the art of war." The neighbouring nations knew that the Jews were weakened by many invasions and defeats, and that they were only a poor remnant, impoverished by the disasters which had come upon them.

CHAPTER VI.

2. "Hirelings of Ephraim." Achior was the "captain of the Ammonites" (v. 5.), but he is here reproached as a mercenary or hired soldier, because he had been pleading the cause of Ephraim, or Judah, a foreign nation. The same word occurs in 1 Macc. vi. 29.

"Prophesied." "Assumed the character of a prophet amongst us," pretending to forecast the future, or to predict the result of our campaign by some divination or oracle.

3. "As one man." The expression is taken from Num. xiv. 15, "If Thou kill this people as one man."

4. "Tread them." In the Greek, "We will burn them up or consume them." The other expressions are taken from Jer. xlv. 10. Ps. cx. 6.

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and their mountains shall be drunken with their blood, and their fields shall be filled with their dead bodies, and their footsteps shall not be able to stand before us, for they shall utterly perish, saith king Nabuchodonosor, lord of all the earth: for he said, None of my words shall be in vain.

5 And thou, Achior, an hireling of Ammon, which hast spoken these words in the day of thine iniquity, shalt see my face no more from this day, until I take vengeance of this nation that came out of Egypt.

6 And then shall the sword of mine army, and the multitude of them that serve me, pass through thy sides, and thou shalt fall among their slain, when I return.

7 Now therefore my servants shall bring thee back into the hill country, and shall set thee in one of the cities of the passages:

8 and thou shalt not perish, till thou be destroyed with them.

9 And if thou persuade thyself in thy mind that they shall not be taken, let not thy countenance fall: I have spoken it, and none of my words shall be in vain.

10 Then Holofernes commanded his servants, that waited in his tent, to take Achior, and bring him to Bethulia, and deliver him into the hands of the children of Israel.

11 So his servants took him, and brought him out of the camp into the plain, and they went from the

“Their footsteps;” *lit.* “the heel of their feet,” their “treading,” or “march.” Perhaps this expresses contempt for a people who fought on foot, without chariots or horses. See above, ii. 8, 12. Or it may be a boast that the conquerors would leave no traces or vestiges of them in the completeness of their destruction. See Nahum iii. 17.

5—8. Achior is denounced as a confederate of the enemy, and is commanded to quit the army of Holofernes, and to share the lot of the nation whose cause he has espoused. Instead of the words “thou shalt not perish,” the Vulgate has, “thou shalt breathe no more,” meaning that he should be deprived of liberty, or of the right to speak in the councils of Holofernes, or to “see his face.”

9. “Let not thy countenance fall.” The Vulgate adds, “Let the paleness which is in thy face depart from thee, if thou imaginest these my words cannot be accomplished.”

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midst of the plain into the hill country, and came unto the fountains that were under Bethulia.

12 And when the men of the city saw them, they took up their weapons, and went out of the city to the top of the hill : and every man that used a sling kept them from coming up by casting of stones against them.

13 Nevertheless having gotten privily under the hill, they bound Achior, and cast him down, and left him at the foot of the hill, and returned to their lord.

14 But the Israelites descended from their city, and came unto him, and loosed him, and brought him into Bethulia, and presented him to the governors of the city :

15 which were in those days Ozias the son of Micha, of the tribe of Simeon, and Chabris the son of Gothoniell, and Charmis the son of Melchiel.

16 And they called together all the ancients of the city, and all their youth ran together, and their women, to the assembly, and they set Achior in the midst of all their people. Then Ozias asked him of that which was done.

17 And he answered and declared unto them the words of the council of Holofernes, and all the words that he had spoken in the midst of the princes of Assur, and whatsoever Holofernes had spoken proudly against the house of Israel.

18 Then the people fell down and worshipped God, and cried unto God, saying,

12. "Kept them from coming up." They maintained a command of the ascent, by occupying the heights above it.

13. "Having gotten privily." "They turned out of the way by "the side of the mountain" (*Vulgate*), by a circuitous route out of reach of the slingers.

"They bound Achior, and cast him down." The Greek text describes it as if he was bound and then rolled down a steep place at the foot of the mountain. But in the *Vulgate* it is, "they tied Achior "to a tree hand and foot, and so left him bound with ropes."

17. "Holofernes had spoken proudly." The *Vulgate* adds: and how Holofernes said "that when he should overcome the children of "Israel, then he might command Achior also himself to be put to "death by divers torments, for having said, The God of heaven is "their defender."

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19 O Lord God of heaven, behold their pride, and pity the low estate of our nation, and look upon the face of those that are sanctified unto thee this day.

20 Then they comforted Achior, and praised him greatly.

21 And Ozias took him out of the assembly unto his house, and made a feast to the elders; and they called on the God of Israel all that night for help.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Holofernes besiegeth Bethulia, 7 and stoppeth the water from them. 22 They faint, and murmur against the governors, 30 who promise to yield within five days.*

THE next day Holofernes commanded all his army, and all his people which were come to take his part, that they should remove their camp against Bethulia, to take aforehand the ascents of the hill country, and to make war against the children of Israel.

2 Then their strong men removed their camps in that day, and the army of the men of war was an

19. "Those that are sanctified." God's saints or holy ones, as in Deut. xxxiii. 3, are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's peculiar people and inheritance, and separated from other nations by circumcision and other covenant rites. In the Vulgate, "Have regard to the face of Thy saints, and shew that Thou forsakest not them that trust on Thee."

20. "They comforted Achior;" saying, "The God of our fathers, Whose power thou hast set forth, will recompense thee: thou shalt see the destruction of our enemies: our God will give liberty to His servants, and will be with thee also in the midst of us."

21. "Made a feast." "A banquet." The same word occurs in Esth. i. 3. The Vulgate calls it, "a supper in which they refreshed themselves together after their fast was over." It was a special token of friendship to Achior, as well as a supply of his wants.

"All that night." They watched through the night, not only to guard against surprise, but also to keep a vigil of prayer, after the example of Samuel (in 1 Sam. xv. 11.), or David (2 Sam. xii. 16.). See also Joel i. 13.

CHAPTER VII.

1. "That came to take his part." All his allies, or auxiliaries. His army had accumulated by reinforcements, or contingents, gathered from the provinces on his march.

2. In the Vulgate the numbers are, "120,000 footmen, and 22,000 horsemen, besides the preparations of those men who had been taken, and had been brought away out of the provinces and cities, of all the youth." The youth of the countries on the line of march had been pressed into the service of the Assyrians.

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hundred and seventy thousand footmen, and twelve thousand horsemen, beside the baggage, and other men that were afoot among them, a very great multitude.

3 And they camped in the valley near unto Bethulia, by the fountain, and they spread themselves in breadth ² over Dothaim even to Belmaim, and in length from Bethulia unto ³ Cyamon, which is over against Esdraelom.

² from
Dothaim,
Junius.
³ Gr. *Bean*
field.

4 Now the children of Israel, when they saw the multitude of them, were greatly troubled, and said every one to his neighbour, ^a Now will these men lick up the face of the earth; for neither the high mountains, nor the valleys, nor the hills, are able to bear their weight.

^a Num. 22. 4.

5 Then every man took up his weapons of war, and when they had kindled fires upon their towers, they remained and watched all that night.

6 But in the second day Holofernes brought forth all his horsemen in the sight of the children of Israel which were in Bethulia,

7 and viewed the passages up to the city, and came to the fountains of their waters, and took them, and

3. "Belmaim." In the Vulgate, "Belma;" in the Syriac, "Abel-meholah," which is mentioned in the history of Gideon (Judg. vii. 22.), and in the account of the call of Elisha (1 Kin. xix. 16.). The same name is put in the Syriac for "Belmen," in iv. 4, above.

"Cyamon," in the Vulgate "Chelmon," was situated on the Eastern slopes of Carmel. Some supposed it to be the same as Camon in Judg. x. 5.

4. "Lick up the face of the earth." "As an ox licketh up the grass of the field" (Num. xxii. 4.), feeding upon it till there is not a blade left; hence it is applied to an army which completely devastates the land, consuming all its fruits and productions. The land could not "bear their weight," or provide sustenance for such a multitude. The Vulgate has here: "the children of Israel, when they saw the multitude of them, prostrated themselves upon the ground, putting ashes upon their heads, and praying with one accord." So above, iv. 11.

5. "Towers." These were strong positions, which they fortified either for defence or reconnoitring, or to harass the enemy. According to the Vulgate, they were posts along "a narrow pathway leading directly between the mountains, which they guarded all day and night." Fires were kindled as a precaution against surprise. See 1 Macc. xii. 28, 29.

7. "To the fountains of their waters." According to the Vulgate, he first cut off an aqueduct by which the city of Bethulia was supplied with water on the South side. It was then observed that they went

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set garrisons of men of war over them, and he himself removed toward his people.

8 Then came unto him all the chief of the children of Esau, and all the governors of the people of Moab, and the captains of the sea coast, and said,

9 Let our lord now hear a word, that there be not an overthrow in thine army.

10 For this people of the children of Israel do not trust in their spears, but in the height of the mountains wherein they dwell, because it is not easy to come up to the tops of their mountains.

11 Now therefore, my lord, fight not against them in battle array, and there shall not so much as one man of thy people perish.

12 Remain in thy camp, and keep all the men of thine army, and let thy servants get into their hands the fountain of water, which issueth forth of the foot of the mountain :

13 for all the inhabitants of Bethulia have their water thence ; so shall thirst kill them, and they shall give up their city, and we and our people shall go up to the tops of the mountains that are near, and will camp upon them, to watch that none go out of the city.

14 So they and their wives and their children shall be consumed with famine, and before the sword come against them, they shall be overthrown in the streets where they dwell.

15 Thus shalt thou render them an evil reward ; because they rebelled, and met not thy person peaceably.

16 And these words pleased Holofernes and all his servants, and he appointed to do as they had spoken.

secretly to draw water from some springs not far from the walls. Upon this Holofernes, by the advice of the Moabites and Ammonites, set guards upon the springs. To cut off the supplies of water was a common device of a besieging army. See 2 Kin. xix. 24. On the other hand, it was adopted by Hezekiah as a means of defence (2 Chr. xxxii. 2—4.).

9. "Overthrow ;" *lit.* "breach," a partial defeat or rout.

10. "In the height of the mountains." Amos reproved Israel and Judah for trusting in their mountains as if they were an impassable barrier to the invader (Amos vi. 1.). But the Psalmist regarded them only as a type of God's protection (Ps. cxxi. 1, 2 ; cxxv. 1, 2.).

17 So the camp of the children of Ammon departed, and with them five thousand of the Assyrians, and they pitched in the valley, and took the waters, and the fountains of the waters of the children of Israel.

18 Then the children of Esau went up with the children of Ammon, and camped in the hill country over against Dothaim: and they sent some of them toward the south, and toward the east, over against Ekrebel, which is near unto Chusi, that is upon the brook Mochmur; and the rest of the army of the Assyrians camped in the plain, and covered the face of the whole land; and their tents and carriages were pitched to a very great multitude.

19 Then the children of Israel cried unto the Lord their God, because their heart failed, for all their enemies had compassed them round about, and there was no way to escape out from among them.

20 Thus all the company of Assur remained about them, both their footmen, chariots, and horsemen, four and thirty days, so that all their vessels of water failed all the inhabitants of Bethulia.

² Or, pits.

21 And the ² cisterns were emptied, and they had not water to drink their fill for one day; for they gave them drink by measure.

22 Therefore their young children were out of heart, and their women and young men fainted for thirst, and fell down in the streets of the city, and by the passages of the gates, and there was no longer any strength in them.

17. "Took the waters." In the Vulgate, Holofernes is said to have "placed all round about a hundred men at every spring." The manœuvres of the Ammonites and the 5,000 Assyrians are omitted.

18. "Carriages." The baggage of the army, with the beasts of burden that conveyed it (ii. 17; iii. 10.).

"Mochmur." In the Syriac, "torrent of Peor." The places mentioned here were probably situated in the tribe of Ephraim, or the district of Samaria.

20. "Four and thirty." In the Vulgate, "twenty days."

22. "Out of heart;" or swooned, through exhaustion and want. "The children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city" (Lam. ii. 11, 19.).

"Fainted for thirst." Compare Lam. iv. 4. Amos viii. 13.

23 Then all the people assembled to Ozias, and to the chief of the city, both young men, and women, and children, and cried with a loud voice, and said before all the elders,

24 God be ^b judge between us and you: for ye ^b Ex. 5. 21. have done us great injury, in that ye have not required peace of the children of Assur.

25 For now we have no helper: but God hath sold us into their hands, that we should be thrown down before them with thirst and great destruction.

26 Now therefore call them unto you, and deliver the whole city for a spoil to the people of Holofernes, and to all his army.

27 For it is better for us to be made a spoil unto them, than to die for thirst: for we will be his servants, that our souls may live, and not see the death of our infants before our eyes, nor our wives nor our children to die.

28 We take to witness against you the heaven and the earth, and our God and Lord of our fathers, which punisheth us according to our sins and the sins of our fathers, ²that he do not according ² Or, lest he do, meaning Holofernes. as we have said this day.

29 Then there was great weeping with one consent in the midst of the assembly; and they cried unto the Lord God with a loud voice.

30 Then said Ozias to them, Brethren, be of good courage, let us yet endure five days, in the which space the Lord our God may turn his mercy toward us; for he will not forsake us utterly.

28. "As we have said this day;" that is, "that Holofernes kill us not with thirst and great destruction" (ver. 25, above). In the Vulgate, "We conjure you to surrender the city, that our end may be short by the edge of the sword, which is made longer by the drought of thirst." Compare Num. xx. 2—4.

29. "They cried unto the Lord." The Vulgate adds, "saying, We have sinned with our fathers, we have done unjustly, we have committed iniquity: have Thou mercy on us, because Thou art good, or punish our iniquities by chastising us Thyself, and deliver not them that trust in Thee to a people that knoweth not Thee; that they may not say among the Gentiles, Where is their God?" The words are taken from Ps. cvi. 6. 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. Joel ii. 17.

30. "Five days." See below, viii. 9; and compare the seven days' respite granted to the men of Jabesh, in 1 Sam. xi. 1—3.

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31 And if these days pass, and there come no help unto us, I will do according to your word.

32 And he dispersed the people, every one to their own charge; and they went unto the walls and towers of their city, and sent the women and children into their houses: and they were very low brought in the city.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 The state and behaviour of Judith a widow. 12 She blameth the governors for their promise to yield, 17 and adviseth them to trust in God. 28 They excuse their promise. 32 She promiseth to do something for them.

NOW at that time Judith heard thereof, which was the daughter of Merari, the son of Ox, the son of Joseph, the son of Oziel, the son of Elcia, the son of Ananias, the son of Gedeon, the son of Raphaim, the son of Acitho, the son of Eliu, the son of Eliab, the son of Nathanael, the son of ² Samael, the son of Salasadaï, the son of Israel.

² Or,
Samael.

2 And Manasses was her husband, of her tribe and kindred, who died in the barley harvest.

3 For as he stood overseeing them that bound sheaves in the field, the heat came upon his head, and he fell on his bed, and died in the city of Bethulia: and they buried him with his fathers in the field between Dothaim and Balamo.

4 So Judith was a widow in her house three years and four months.

5 And she made her a tent upon the top of her

32. "Very low brought;" or, "in much distress," or affliction.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. "Judith." This name occurs in Gen. xxvi. 34. It might signify "a woman of praise" or renown, or simply "a Jewess." Hence some have conjectured that the name stands for the widowed nation or land of Judæa. She is represented as one who gave praise and glory to God (xiii. 14, 20; xvi. 1.), and received the praise of many for her piety and patriotism. Compare Prov. xxxi. 30.

"Samael." The name is probably "Salamiel," or "Shelumiel, son of "Zurishaddai," the prince of the tribe of Simeon in Num. i. 6. In the Vulgate, it is "Salathiel, the son of Simeon, the son of Reuben." But in ix. 2, Judith is represented as belonging to the tribe of Simeon.

3. "Balamo." Probably "Baal-hamon," where Solomon had a vineyard (Cant. viii. 11.).

5. "A tent," or private chamber (*Vulgate*), "upon the top of her house." The housetop was a place of retirement, for secret converse or prayer. There Samuel communed with Saul (1 Sam. ix. 25, 26.).

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house, and put on sackcloth upon her loins, and ware her widow's apparel.

6 And she fasted all the days of her widowhood, save the eves of the sabbaths, and the sabbaths, and the eves of the new moons, and the new moons, and the feasts and solemn days of the house of Israel.

7 She was also of a goodly countenance, and very beautiful to behold: and her husband Manasses had left her gold, and silver, and menservants, and maidservants, and cattle, and lands; ² and she re- ^{2 Or, and she kept them.} mained upon them.

"A corner of a housetop" represents solitude or concealment, in Prov. xxi. 9. There Rahab hid the spies (Josh. ii. 6, 8.). It was a place for mourning or lamentation (Is. xxii. 1. Jer. xlviii. 38.); also for prayer (Acts x. 9. Ps. cii. 7.). At the feast of tabernacles the booths were sometimes erected on the housetops: "they made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house" (Neh. viii. 16.). See Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, p. 94.

6. "She fasted." The fast was kept by abstaining from food during the day (Est. iv. 16.), and taking an "austere repast" in the evening, in which "for food they had bread, for suppage salt, and for sauce herbs" (*Hooker*).

"Eves of the sabbaths." In the Greek, "prosabbaton," a word which occurs in St. Mark xv. 42, and in the title of Ps. xcii. The Jews usually began the celebration of their festivals in the preceding night, or in the evening of the previous day (see Is. xxx. 29.), and before some of them there was a "day of preparation" (St. Matt. xxvii. 62. St. Mark xv. 42. St. Luke xxiii. 54. St. John xix. 31, 42.). When special fasts were decreed by authority, festival and Sabbath days were excepted (*Hooker*). See below, x. 2.

"Solemn days;" rather, "days of rejoicing," celebrated with hymns of praise, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody (Is. li. 3. Jer. xxxi. 13. xxxiii. 11.).

Judith is represented as a pattern of holy widowhood, in which worldly pleasures are renounced, the flesh is chastened with fasting and austerities, and thus presented as a sacrifice to God, together with the soul's offering of earnest and incessant prayer. By this means she sought not only to live nearer to God, but to make effectual intercession for her people in the days of their sore distress and peril. Such was the widowhood of Anna (St. Luke ii. 36, 37.); the life of one who was a "widow indeed, and desolate" (1 Tim. v. 5, 6.). This was the more remarkable from her possession of wealth, rank, and beauty, which would have secured her respect and admiration from the world, and opportunities of pleasures and earthly consolations. But all this she sacrificed to the service of God and her country. The Vulgate describes the "tent" (ver. 5, above) as "a private chamber, in which she abode shut up with her maids."

7. "She remained upon them." See below, x. 2. As a virtuous and exemplary matron, she was a "keeper at home" (Titus ii. 5.); like the vine that cleaves to the wall of the house (Ps. cxxviii. 3.), not wandering from house to house (1 Tim. v. 13. Prov. vii. 11.), but dwelling

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8 And there was none that gave her an ill word; for she feared God greatly.

9 Now when she heard the evil words of the people against the governor, that they fainted for lack of water; for Judith had heard ^aall the words that Ozias had spoken unto them, and that he had sworn to deliver the city unto the Assyrians after five days;

10 then she sent her waitingwoman, that had the government of all things that she had, to call Ozias and Chabris and Charmis, the ancients of the city.

11 And they came unto her, and she said unto them, Hear me now, O ye governors of the inhabitants of Bethulia: for your words that ye have spoken before the people this day are not right, touching this oath which ye made and pronounced between God and you, and have promised to deliver the city to our enemies, unless within these days the Lord turn to help you.

12 And now who are ye that have tempted God this day, and stand instead of God among the children of men?

amongst her own people and caring for them (2 Kin. iv. 13. Prov. xxxi. 15, 27.).

8. The Vulgate, "she was greatly renowned among all," more for the piety that was the ornament of her soul, than for her beauty of person. See Prov. xxxi. 30.

10. "Her waitingwoman." The chief and most trusted of her hand-maidens. The word is applied to the maids of Rebekah in Gen. xxiv. 61, and to the attendants of Pharaoh's daughter (Exod. ii. 5.).

12. "That have tempted God." They had provoked Him, for they had as it were prescribed laws to Him, like their fathers in the desert, when they "limited" or circumscribed His power (Ps. lxxviii. 41.), as though some miracles were possible, but others were beyond His power. They had before resorted to prayer and fasting (chap. iv. 9, &c.); but now their faith had failed them: the peril was greater, and they doubted the power or will of God to rescue them from it. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not?" (Is. lviii. 3.) "It is vain to serve God. What profit is it that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" (Mal. iii. 14, 15.).

"Stand instead of God." God had given them no authority to speak thus on His behalf. It was their duty rather to persevere in prayer, and to leave the result in His hands. He would choose the time and mode of deliverance. The "appointed time" is His decree, which is secret; whilst it tarries, faith must wait, and hope must endure (Hab. ii. 3, 4. St. Luke xviii. 7.).

JUDITH, VIII.

13 And now try the Lord Almighty, but ye shall never know any thing.

14 ^b For ye cannot find the depth of the heart of ^b 1 Cor. 2. 11. man, neither can ye perceive the things that he thinketh: then how can ye search out God, that hath made all these things, and ^c know his mind, ^c 1 Cor. 2. 16. or comprehend his purpose? Nay, my brethren, provoke not the Lord our God to anger.

15 For if he will not help us within these five days, he hath power to defend us when he will, even every day, or to destroy us before our enemies.

16 Do not ² bind the counsels of the Lord our ² Or, engage. God: for ^d God is not as man, that he may be ^d Num. 23. 19. threatened; neither is he as the son of man, that he should be wavering.

17 Therefore let us wait for salvation of him, and call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it please him.

13, 14. God works mysteriously, and His counsels are hidden from us (1 Cor. ii. 11, 16.). Even men's secrets, and the thoughts which they revolve within them, are impenetrable. The heart of kings is unsearchable (Prov. xxv. 3.). Much more are the judgments of God a great deep (Ps. xxxvi. 6; lxxvii. 19.).

16. "Do not bind." The word strictly means to pawn, or pledge in security. Do not deal with the power of God as if it was at your disposal: for it is not subject to the conditions which limit man's power to aid. So, in the siege of Samaria, those who despaired of Divine help tempted God and limited His power (2 Kin. vii. 1, 2, 17—20.).

"Wavering;" or be constrained by entreaty. Prayer for deliverance must be humble, and in submission to God's wise disposal, not attempting to prescribe to God what He should do, or when He should do it. The pattern of such prayer is the petition of Abraham for Sodom: "O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak," &c. (Gen. xviii. 32. Judg. vi. 39.). For spiritual benefits we pray with confidence; but for temporal deliverances without the same assurance, saying, "Who knoweth if He will return and repent?" (Joel ii. 14.); or, "Who can tell whether God will be gracious unto me?" (2 Sam. xii. 22.).

17. "If it please him." So David said (2 Sam. xv. 25.), "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord," He will restore me to my kingdom. See also 1 Macc. iii. 58—60.

Instead of vv. 15—17, the Vulgate has: "You have set a time for the mercy of the Lord, and you have appointed Him a day according to your pleasure. But forasmuch as the Lord is patient, let us be penitent for this same thing, and with many tears let us beg His pardon: for God will not threaten like man, nor be inflamed to anger like the son of man. And therefore let us humble our souls before Him, and continue in a humble spirit in His service. Let us ask the Lord with tears

JUDITH, VIII.

18 For there arose none in our age, neither is there any now in these days, neither tribe, nor family, nor ²people, nor city, among us, which worship gods made with hands, ^eas hath been aforetime.

² Or, town.

^e Judg. 2. 11. & 4. 1. & 6. 1.

19 For the which cause our fathers were given to the sword, and for a spoil, and had a great fall before our enemies.

20 But we know none other god, therefore we trust that he will not despise us, nor any of our nation.

21 For if we be taken so, all Judea shall lie waste, and our sanctuary shall be spoiled; and he will require the profanation thereof at our mouth.

³ Or, fear.

22 And the ³slaughter of our brethren, and the captivity of the country, and the desolation of our inheritance, will he turn upon our heads among the Gentiles, wheresoever we shall be in bondage; and we shall be an offence and a reproach to all them that possess us.

23 For our servitude shall not be directed to favour: but the Lord our God shall turn it to dishonour.

“that, according to His will, so He would shew His mercy to us; that as “our heart is troubled by their pride, so also we may glorify Him in our “humility.”

18—20. The author of the book seems here to introduce the ideas of a later age, for this plea of constancy in the service of the true God could not have been truly urged in the reign of Manasseh or Josiah. See v. 18; iv. 3.

21. “For if we be taken so,” &c. If we surrender to the enemy, through cowardice or distrust of God’s Providence, we must bear the blame of all the desolation and profanation of the holy places that will follow.

“He will require;” or, “Judea will require,” or account us as the guilty causes of the calamity through the hasty utterances of our mouth. Another reading is, “of our blood,” instead of “our mouth;” but the reference is to the oath of Ozias (above, ver. 11.).

22, 23. “We shall be an offence.” The word sometimes means “an abomination,” or an object of detestation. The dishonourable captivity which would result from a surrender would be worse than death itself. There would be nothing to mitigate its evils. Their enemies, who obtained possession of their persons and goods, would despise them as traitors. See 1 Macc. iii. 59.

“Directed to favour.” So Jeremiah (xxix. 7.) spoke of “peace” in

JUDITH, VIII.

24 Now therefore, O brethren, let us shew an example to our brethren, because their hearts depend upon us, and the sanctuary, and the house, and the altar, rest upon us.

25 Moreover let us give thanks to the Lord our God, which trieth us, even as he did our fathers.

26 Remember what things he did to ^fAbraham, ^fGen. 22. 1. and how he tried Isaac, and what happened to ^sJacob in Mesopotamia of Syria, when he kept the ^sGen. 23. 7. sheep of Laban his mother's brother.

27 For he hath not tried us in the fire, as he did them, for the examination of their hearts, neither hath he taken vengeance on us : but the Lord doth scourge them that come near unto him, to admonish them.

28 Then said Ozias to her, All that thou hast spoken hast thou spoken with a good heart, and there is none that may gainsay thy words.

the land of captivity; and in Ps. cvi. 46, they are said to be pitied by their conquerors.

24, 25. "Let us shew an example;" or, give proof of our constancy to our brethren at Jerusalem, that they also may be encouraged to endure the worst, sooner than betray the holy place. In the Vulgate, however, she is made to address the chief men of Bethulia, and to urge them to exhort and comfort the people of God who looked up to them for guidance.

26. "Abraham was tempted, and being proved by many tribulations, "was made the friend of God" (*Vulgate*). His life was spent in patient waiting for the fulfilment of God's promises, when his hope was deferred, and famine and other troubles came upon him. Isaac waited twenty years for an answer to his prayer (Gen. xxv. 21.). For twenty years Jacob was in bondage in Padan-aram (Gen. xxxi. 38, 41.). The Vulgate adds the example of Moses, whose call to deliver Israel was delayed for forty years. These men "passed through many tribulations, remaining faithful."

27. Perhaps the meaning is, "Is He not trying us as He tried them, "not for vengeance, but to discover what is in our hearts?" The chastisement was a proof that God was near to them, and was dealing with them as with sons (Deut. viii. 5, 16.). The Vulgate adds: "But they "that did not receive the trials with the fear of the Lord, but uttered "their impatience and the reproach of their murmuring against the Lord, "were destroyed by the destroyer, and perished by serpents. As for us, "therefore, let us not revenge ourselves for these things which we suffer, "but esteeming these very punishments to be less than our sins deserve, "let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which, like servants, "we are chastised, have happened for our amendment, and not for our "destruction."

28. "With a good heart." With a good, pious, and patriotic intention. She had "spoken the truth" (*Vulgate*), and with good reason.

29 For this is not the first day wherein thy wisdom is manifested; but from the beginning of thy days all the people have known thy understanding, because the disposition of thine heart is good.

30 But the people were very thirsty, and compelled us to do unto them as we have spoken, and to bring an oath upon ourselves, which we will not break.

31 Therefore now pray thou for us, because thou art a godly woman, and the Lord will send us rain to fill our cisterns, and we shall faint no more.

32 Then said Judith unto them, Hear me, and I will do a thing, which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation.

33 Ye shall stand this night in the gate, and I will go forth with my waitingwoman: and within the days that ye have promised to deliver the city to our enemies the Lord will visit Israel by mine hand.

34 But enquire not ye of mine act: for I will not declare it unto you, till the things be finished that I do.

30. "We will not break." So Jephthah said, "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back" (Judg. xi. 35.).

31. "We shall faint no more." We shall revive, and take courage, and hold out against the enemy.

32. "I will do a thing." Judith has formed a resolution to venture her life in the Assyrian camp, to kill Holofernes by craft. According to the Vulgate, she believed that she had been prompted to make this enterprise by a Divine direction, as she says, "As you know that what I have been able to say is of God, so that which I intend to do, prove ye if it be of God, and pray that God may strengthen my design." So Esther said (Esth. iv. 16.), "If I perish, I perish." The act of Judith was so far like that of Esther, that it was a venturing of her life for the deliverance of her people. It differed from it in the craft and guile by which it was accomplished; and perhaps the secrecy which she maintained might indicate some misgiving as to the means she was about to use to obtain relief for her people.

33. "Ye shall stand this night in the gate." In the dead of night the gates of the city were to be opened to allow her to go forth into the enemies' host.

34. The Vulgate adds: "Till I bring you word, let nothing else be done but to pray for me to the Lord our God." Judith is represented throughout the narrative as relying upon the help of God and the weapons of prayer, and not upon her own strength, courage, or resolu-

JUDITH, IX.

35 Then said Ozias and the princes unto her, Go in peace, and the Lord God be before thee, to take vengeance on our enemies.

36 So they returned from the tent, and went to their wards.

CHAPTER IX.

1 Judith humbleth herself, 2 and prayeth God to prosper her purpose against the enemies of his sanctuary.

THEN Judith fell upon her face, and put ashes upon her head, and uncovered the sackcloth wherewith she was clothed; and about the time that the incense of that evening was offered in Jerusalem in the house of the Lord Judith cried with a loud voice, and said,

2 O Lord God of my father ^a Simeon, to whom ^{a Gen. 34. 2, 25, &c.} thou gavest a sword to take vengeance of the stran-

tion. "The men trembled with fear, but by the help of holy prayer a woman became their champion, and avenged them" (*St. Augustine*).

36. "The tent." The tent on the housetop, mentioned above (ver. 5.); called in the Vulgate, "her private chamber," or "oratory."

"Their wards." The places assigned to them in the defence of the city.

CHAPTER IX.

1. "Uncovered the sackcloth." Either, "she uncovered herself," as an act of shame and deep humiliation, suggested by the disgraceful fall of Dinah, Jacob's daughter; or, as it is paraphrased in the Syriac, "she rent her upper garment, and thus exposed to view the sackcloth which she wore beneath it." Compare 2 Kin. vi. 30. The "time of incense" (St. Luke i. 10. Exod. xxx. 7, 8.), was the hour of the "lighting of lamps" in the sanctuary.

2. "My father Simeon." See above, on viii. 1. Simeon is probably mentioned as the patriarch from whom Judith traced her descent. For Simeon would not otherwise have been chosen as a pattern of zeal for God. For there was treachery and cruelty in the vengeance which he took for his sister Dinah. He was the most guilty of the brothers in the conspiracy against Joseph, and was therefore detained as a prisoner in Egypt. His tribe was disgraced by the whoredom of Zimri (Num. xxv. 14.). The "testament of Simeon" speaks of envy and whoredom as the sins which had marred his life. The unholy league of Simeon and Levi in the massacre of Shechem was cursed by Jacob (Gen. xlix. 5.); and the tribe of Levi was "divided in Israel" from the Simeonites, in order to be "joined to the Lord" (Exod. xxxii. 26. Num. xxv. 7, 8, 14.).

"To whom thou gavest a sword." The Levites, in Exod. xxxii. 27, wielded their swords as God's executioners, at the call of His servant Moses. It was not thus that Simeon and Levi "took each man his sword," to surprise and slay the Shechemites. Hence, the example of Shechem could not be rightly pleaded, for God never set His approval

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gers, who loosened the girdle of a maid to defile her, and discovered the thigh to her shame, and polluted her virginity to her reproach; for thou saidst, It shall not be so; and yet they did so:

3 wherefore thou gavest their rulers to be slain, so that they dyed their bed in blood, being deceived, and smotest the servants with their lords, and the lords upon their thrones;

4 and hast given their wives for a prey, and their daughters to be captives, and all their spoils to be divided among thy dear children; which were moved with thy zeal, and abhorred the pollution of their blood, and called upon thee for aid: O God, O my God, hear me also a widow.

5 For thou hast wrought not only those things, but also the things which fell out before, and which ensued after; thou hast thought upon the things which are now, and which are to come.

6 Yea, what things thou didst determine were ready at hand, and said, Lo, we are here: for all

upon it, although He shielded Jacob and his sons from the evil consequences which might have resulted from their rashness (Gen. xxxv. 5.). The Douay Bible has this gloss on the verse: "The justice of God is here praised, in punishing by the sword of Simeon the crime of the Shechemites, and not the act of Simeon, which was justly condemned by his father; though even with regard to this act we may distinguish between his zeal against the crime committed by the ravishers of his sister, which zeal may be considered just, and the manner of punishing that crime, which was irregular and excessive." This distinction appears in the division between Simeon and Levi, the former representing the zeal of envy, wrath, and jealousy, and the latter the holier zeal which is jealous for God's honour, and is indignant at the sin which outrages His holiness.

3. "They dyed their bed in blood, being deceived." Or, "Thou gavest up to bloodshed the bed which had known their deceit;" that is, the deceit which Shechem himself had practised in order to gratify his guilty passion. The deceit practised by Simeon and Levi is regarded here as a retaliation for the deceiving of their sister.

"With their lords." Literally, "upon their lords," first slaying the chief men amongst them, and then adding the massacre of their slaves and bondmen. In the Targum of Jerusalem, on Gen. xlv., a speech is put into the mouth of Judah, in which he refers to the slaughter of Shechem, and threatens Egypt with similar vengeance.

4. "Abhorred the pollution of their blood." Such was the praise of Phinehas for executing judgment upon Zimri and Cozbi (Num. xxv. 11.). But Scripture does not warrant the application of it to the vindictive fury of Simeon at Shechem.

JUDITH, IX.

thy ways are prepared, and thy judgments are in thy foreknowledge.

7 For, behold, the Assyrians are multiplied in their power; they are exalted with horse and man; they glory in the strength of their footmen; they trust in shield, and spear, and bow, and sling; and know not that thou art the Lord that breakest the battles: the Lord is thy name.

8 Throw down their strength in thy power, and bring down their force in thy wrath: for they have purposed to defile thy sanctuary, and to pollute the tabernacle where thy glorious name resteth, and to cast down with sword the horn of thy altar.

9 Behold their pride, and send thy wrath upon their heads: give into mine hand, which am a widow, the power that I have conceived.

10 ^bSmite by the deceit of my lips the servant ^b Judg. 4. 21.
& 5. 26. with the prince, and the prince with the servant:

6. "Thy ways are prepared." So, in Gen. xli. 32, Joseph says, "the thing is established, or prepared of God." Though we can see no tokens of the coming event, the causes by which it is to be produced are working secretly, and are "ready to be revealed" whenever it seems good to the Disposer of all things. It is no new thing to God, but only a revelation to us of what has always been present to Him. See St. Luke ii. 31. 1 Pet. i. 5, and Wisd. xi. 21, 22; xii. 18.

7. "With horse and man. . . the Lord that breakest the battles." These words are taken from Exod. xv. 1—3, "The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." "The Lord is a man of war;" or, "He who breaketh or destroyeth wars" (*Septuagint*). See below, xvi. 3. 2 Macc. xii. 28. Hence the Vulgate has: "Look upon the camp of the Assyrians now, as Thou wast pleased to look upon the Egyptians, when they pursued armed after Thy servants, trusting in their chariots and their horsemen, and a multitude of warriors. But Thou lookedst over their camp, and darkness wearied them."

8. "Where thy glorious name resteth." "The holy place, where God caused His name to dwell" (Deut. xii. 11.); where He manifested His presence by the cloud of glory (1 Kin. viii. 10, 11.). The altar of burnt-offering, which stood in the court of the Temple, had "four horns in the four corners thereof," and was of shittim wood overlaid with brass (Exod. xxvii. 1, 2. Ezek. xliii. 15.).

10. "By the deceit of my lips." In the Vulgate: "Let him be caught in the net of his own eyes in my regard, and do Thou strike him by the graces of the words of my lips." She is probably continuing her comparison of the Assyrian captain to Shechem, who was ensnared through the lust of the eyes. She believed that her pious purpose of saving the Temple from profanation would justify her in an act of deceit, as well as in exposing her own life and honour to peril.

break down their stateliness by the hand of a woman.

c. Judg. 7. 2.
1 Sam. 17.
47.
2 Chr. 14.
11. & 16. 8.
& 20. 6.

11 ° For thy power standeth not in multitude, nor thy might in strong men : for thou art a God of the afflicted, an helper of the oppressed, an upholder of the weak, a protector of the forlorn, a saviour of them that are without hope.

12 I pray thee, I pray thee, O God of my father, and God of the inheritance of Israel, Lord of the heavens and earth, Creator of the waters, King of every creature, hear thou my prayer :

13 and make my speech and deceit to be their wound and stripe, who have purposed cruel things against thy covenant, and thy hallowed house, and against the top of Sion, and against the house of the possession of thy children.

14 And make every nation and tribe to acknowledge that thou art the God of all power and might, and that there is none other that protecteth the people of Israel but thou.

“ Their stateliness.” Either “ their proud and haughty spirit,” or “ their host,” or army. Instead of this the Vulgate has : “ Give me “ constancy in my mind, that I may despise him, and fortitude, that “ I may overthrow him ; for this shall be a glorious monument for Thy “ Name, when he shall fall by the hand of a woman.” So Sisera had fallen by the hand of a woman (Judg. iv. 9, 21 ; v. 26.).

11. “ Of the forlorn,” or “ despondent ;” those who “ distrust ” or despair of safety (2 Macc. ix. 22.). These expressions are taken from Ps. x. 14 ; lxxii. 12, and elsewhere. So in the ancient Liturgies, God is addressed as “ He Who looseth the prisoners, Who raiseth up them that “ are fallen, the Hope of those who are despaired of, the Help of those “ who have no helper, the Port of those who are tossed by tempests, the “ Avenger of the oppressed ” (*Liturgy of St. Mark*). The Vulgate has : “ The prayer of the humble and meek hath always pleased Thee.” Compare Ps. lxix. 32, 33 ; cii. 19, 20.

12. “ I pray thee.” In the Greek, “ Yea, yea !” It expresses the earnestness with which she renews her request. It is used as a word of entreaty in Philem. 20.

13. “ To be their wound and stripe.” So the words of an enemy are compared to a sword in the lips, or the tongue is said to be a sharp sword (Ps. lv. 21 ; lvii. 4 ; lxiv. 3.).

14. “ None other that protecteth.” So in 2 Kin. xix. 34 God promises to “ shield ” the city of Jerusalem, for His own sake. “ Our “ shield is of the Lord ” (Ps. lxxxix. 17, 18.). The deliverance of Jerusalem in this her imminent peril would prove to all nations that there was a Divine power that interfered in her behalf, since all other help had failed her (Ps. cviii. 12, 13.).

JUDITH, X.

CHAPTER X.

3 *Judith doth set forth herself.* 10 *She and her maid go forth into the camp.* 17 *The watch take and conduct her to Holofernes.*

NOW after that she had ceased to cry unto the God of Israel, and had made an end of all these words,

2 she rose where she had fallen down, and called her maid, and went down into the house, in the which she abode in the sabbath days, and in her feast days,

3 and pulled off the sackcloth which she had on, and put off the garments of her widowhood, and washed her body all over with water, and anointed herself with precious ointment, and braided the hair of her head, and put on a ²tire upon it, and put on ²Gr. *mitre*. her garments of gladness, wherewith she was clad during the life of Manasses her husband.

4 And she took sandals upon her feet, and put about her her bracelets, and her chains, and her rings, and her earrings, and all her ornaments, and decked herself bravely, to allure the eyes of all men that should see her.

CHAPTER X.

3. "Pulled off." Literally, "rolled up," as was usual with garments when they were changed or laid aside (Heb. i. 12. Is. xxxiv. 4.).

"Precious." Rather, "with rich, or choice ointment."

"Braided," or "parted;" arranged the hair with a "crisping pin" (Is. iii. 22.). To wear the hair dishevelled or loose was a sign of mourning. At other times the hair would be plaited or braided, and pins would be used to keep the hair parted (Judg. xvi. 13, 14.). Ornaments were also laid aside at a time of mourning (Exod. xxxiii. 4. Ezek. xxvi. 16. 2 Sam. xiv. 2.).

"Garments of gladness." Bridal or festival apparel. See Is. lxi. 3, 10.

4. "Sandals." Mourners often went barefoot (2 Sam. xv. 30. Is. xx. 4.).

"Decked herself bravely." She beautified herself greatly. The same word is used of Tamar, when she put her widow's garments off from her (Gen. xxxviii. 14.). The Vulgate adds: "The Lord also gave her more beauty because all this dressing up did not proceed from sensuality, but from virtue; and therefore the Lord increased this her beauty, so that she appeared to all men's eyes incomparably lovely."

"To allure," or deceive the Assyrians, as she had desired in her prayer (ix. 13.).

JUDITH, X.

2 Or,
wrapped,
or, packed.

5 Then she gave her maid a bottle of wine, and a cruse of oil, and filled a bag with parched corn, and lumps of figs, and with fine bread; so she ²folded all these things together, and laid them upon her.

6 Thus they went forth to the gate of the city of Bethulia, and found standing there Ozias, and the ancients of the city, Chabris and Charmis.

7 And when they saw her, that her countenance was altered, and her apparel was changed, they wondered at her beauty very greatly, and said unto her,

8 The God, the God of our fathers, give thee favour, and accomplish thine enterprizes to the glory of the children of Israel, and to the exaltation of Jerusalem. Then they worshipped God.

9 And she said unto them, Command the gates of the city to be opened unto me, that I may go forth to accomplish the things whereof ye have spoken with me. So they commanded the young men to open unto her, as she had spoken.

10 And when they had done so, Judith went out, she, and her maid with her; and the men of the city looked after her, until she was gone down the mountain, and till she had passed the valley, and could see her no more.

11 Thus they went straight forth in the valley: and the first watch of the Assyrians met her,

5. "Bottle." The Greek word is a compound one, and probably means a leathern flask of large size (Hebrew, "Nebel," 2 Sam. xvi. 1.)

"Fine," or pure, "bread." The Vulgate and Syriac add "cheese."

"Folded all these things." Literally, she doubled up all her vessels, so as to enclose them in a bundle. She took this large provision, that she might not be compelled to eat the meats of the Gentiles, from which the religious Jews scrupulously abstained, lest they should defile themselves (Dan. i. 8, 16.).

6. "The ancients." The three elders, with whom she had conferred before (viii. 10.).

8. "Thine enterprizes." "The counsels of her heart;" or, the schemes which she had secretly contrived for their deliverance. The Vulgate adds: "that Jerusalem may glory in thee, and that thy name may be in the number of the holy and the just. And they that were there said all with one voice, So be it, so be it."

"Then they worshipped God." It should be, "She fell down, and worshipped God, and said unto them, Command, &c." (*Greek and Syriac*).

JUDITH, X.

12 and took her, and asked her, Of what people art thou? and whence comest thou? and whither goest thou? And she said, I am a woman of the Hebrews, and am fled from them: for they shall be given you to be consumed:

13 and I am coming before Holofernes the chief captain of your army, to declare words of truth; and I will shew him a way, whereby he shall go, and win all the hill country, without losing the body or life of any one of his men.

14 Now when the men heard her words, and beheld her countenance, they wondered greatly at her beauty, and said unto her,

15 Thou hast saved thy life, in that thou hast hastened to come down to the presence of our lord: now therefore come to his tent, and some of us shall conduct thee, until they have delivered thee to his hands.

16 And when thou standest before him, be not afraid in thine heart, but shew unto him according to thy word; and he will entreat thee well.

17 Then they chose out of them an hundred men ^{2 Or, and they prepared a chariot for her.} to accompany her and her maid; and they brought her to the tent of Holofernes.

12. "And am fled from them." In order to deceive the Assyrians, and to conceal her real purpose, she pretends to be a fugitive or deserter from the Hebrews. Such acts of deceit were not uncommon, and they appear to have been thought justifiable when practised against an enemy in time of war. Thus Simeon answered Hamor deceitfully (Gen. xxxiv. 13.); Rahab deceived the king of Jericho (Josh. ii. 4, 5.). Such was the deceit of the woman of En-rogel (2 Sam. xvii. 20.), or of Elisha, in 2 Kin. vi. 19. But to lie in order to kill, as Judith did, is far less defensible than the act of the midwives in Exod. i. 18, 19, who lied in order to save life. It is observed in the note in the Douay Bible, that "all that is related in Scripture of the servants of God is not approved "by the Scripture."

"To be consumed." The Vulgate adds: "Because they despised you, and would not of their own accord yield themselves, that they might find mercy in your sight."

13. "Without losing," &c. Literally, "and there shall not fail of his men one flesh, or breath of life;" that is, "any flesh wherein is the breath of life," as in Gen. vi. 17; or, "without the loss of one man of his army" (*Vulgate*).

17. "To accompany her and her maid." They were chosen to be her escort or body-guard; not "to prepare her chariot," as the *Margin* renders it.

18 Then was there a concourse throughout all the camp: for her coming was noised among the tents, and they came about her, as she stood without the tent of Holofernes, till they told him of her.

19 And they wondered at her beauty, and admired the children of Israel because of her, and every one said to his neighbour, Who would despise this people, that have among them such women? surely it is not good that one man of them be left, who being let go might deceive the whole earth.

20 And they that lay near Holofernes went out, and all his servants, and they brought her into the tent.

21 Now Holofernes rested upon his bed under a canopy, which was woven with purple, and gold, and emeralds, and precious stones.

22 So they shewed him of her; and he came out before his tent with silver lamps going before him.

23 And when Judith was come before him and his servants, they all marvelled at the beauty of her countenance; and she fell down upon her face, and did reverence unto him: and his servants took her up.

CHAPTER XI.

³ *Holofernes asketh Judith the cause of her coming.* ⁶ *She telleth him how and when he may prevail.* ²⁰ *He is much pleased with her wisdom and beauty.*

THEN said Holofernes unto her, Woman, be of good comfort, fear not in thine heart: for I

19. "Deceive the whole earth." Or, "gain dominion over the earth" "by their wisdom, craft, or subtlety." The same word is used of Pharaoh's dealing with Israel (above, v. 11.).

21. "Holofernes rested." It was in the night. See above, viii. 33.

"Under a canopy." Composed of gauze, curtains, hangings, or nets, for protection against gnats and other insects. See below, xiii. 9, 15; xvi. 19. Besides the pillars and the canopy, there were sometimes added to the beds of the rich other luxuries and ornaments, such as ivory carvings, gold and silver, purple and fine linen. See Esth. i. 6. Cant. iii. 7, 9, 10.

23. "She fell down." Perhaps trembling, or betraying some signs of alarm and terror, being alone and defenceless in the midst of the armed Assyrian host, and conscious of the difficulty and peril of her enterprise. See St. Mark v. 33.

CHAPTER XI.

1—4. Holofernes assures Judith of safety and protection. It was not true that he had never hurt any of the people that made their submission

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never hurt any that was willing to serve Nabuchodonosor, the king of all the earth.

2 Now therefore, if thy people that dwelleth in the mountains had not set light by me, I would not have lifted up my spear against them: but they have done these things to themselves.

3 But now tell me wherefore thou art fled from them, and art come unto us: for thou art come for safeguard; be of good comfort, thou shalt live this night, and hereafter:

4 for none shall hurt thee, but entreat thee well, as they do the servants of king Nabuchodonosor my lord.

5 Then Judith said unto him, Receive the words of thy servant, and suffer thine handmaid to speak in thy presence, and I will declare no lie to my lord this night.

6 And if thou wilt follow the words of thine handmaid, God will bring the thing perfectly to pass by thee; and my lord shall not fail of his purposes.

7 As Nabuchodonosor king of all the earth liveth, and as his power liveth, who hath sent thee for the upholding of every living thing: for not only men, shall serve him by thee, but also the beasts of the field, and the cattle, and the fowls of the air, shall

to the Assyrian monarch. See iii. 7, 8, "He destroyed their cities, and "cut down their groves" (*Vulgate*).

6. "By thee." The sense is better expressed in the *Vulgate*, "The Lord will do *with* thee a perfect thing," which is ambiguous, as Judith was mentally anticipating the complete victory of the Hebrews, which was to be brought to pass by her means.

7. "Liveth." She swears by the life of Nebuchodonosor, as Joseph swears "by the life of Pharaoh" in Gen. xlii. 15, expressing his reliance upon the stability and security of Pharaoh's throne. The fierce menace which the Jerusalem Targum on Gen. xliv. puts into Judah's mouth, contains a defiance of Joseph and of Pharaoh, "by whose life he had "sworn."

"The beasts of the field." This seems to be taken from the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the King of Babylon, (Jer. xxvii. 6; xxviii. 14. Dan. ii. 38.). So complete was his subjugation of the conquered countries, that even the wild animals felt his power, as well as the beasts that usually served man, and submitted to his yoke. Beasts and birds of prey often followed in the track of conquerors, preying upon the slain in battle, or invading the lands which their arms had depopulated (Ezek. xxxix. 17—20. Is. xiii. 19—22.). Judith had perhaps in her mind, that if her

live by thy power under Nabuchodonosor and all his house.

8 For we have heard of thy wisdom and thy policies, and it is reported in all the earth, that thou only art ²excellent in all the kingdom, and mighty in knowledge, and wonderful in feats of war.

² Or,
in favour.

^a ch. 5. 5.

9 Now as concerning the matter, which ^aAchior did-speak in thy council, we have heard his words; for the men of Bethulia ³saved him, and he declared unto them all that he had spoken unto thee.

³ Or, *got him*.

10 Therefore, O lord and governor, reject not his word; but lay it up in thine heart, for it is true: for our nation shall not be punished, neither can the sword prevail against them, except they sin against their God.

11 And now, that my lord be not defeated and frustrate of his purpose, even death is now fallen upon them, and their sin hath overtaken them, wherewith they will provoke their God to anger, whensoever they shall do that which is not fit to be done:

12 for their victuals fail them, and all their water is scant, and they have determined to lay hands upon their cattle, and purposed to consume

enterprise succeeded the Assyrian army would thus become a prey. See 1 Sam. xvii. 46, 47.

8. "Policies;" or, "wise counsels," as in Eccclus. i. 6. "Contrivances" for the safety or advantage of those who were under his authority.

"Excellent." Literally, "good," or highly esteemed by the Assyrian monarch and people. See St. Luke xxii. 25. Acts xxiv. 2.

"Feats of war." Including the "discipline" of the forces under his command (*Vulgate*).

10. "Except they sin against their God." See the speech of Achior, v. 20. Judith now asserts that they had so sinned, and therefore their defence was departed from them. Hence the *Vulgate* has: "It is certain that our God is so offended with our sins, that He hath sent word by His prophets to the people, that He will deliver them up for their sins." The reference is to Amos v. 27; vi. 14, and to many of Isaiah's prophecies, as Is. xxxix. 6. Micah iii. 12. 2 Kin. xvii. 13, 18, 23.

11. "Not fit to be done;" or, "amiss," as the word is rendered in St. Luke xxiii. 41. "Nicanor did no hurt," or "nothing amiss," or unlawful (2 Macc. xiv. 23.).

12. "Their water is scant." See above, vii. 12, 13, 21, 22.

"To lay hands upon their cattle." In the *Vulgate*, "to kill their cattle, and to drink the blood of them." This was an offence forbidden

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all those things, that God hath forbidden them to eat by his laws:

13 and are resolved to spend the firstfruits of the corn, and the tenths of wine and oil, which they had sanctified, and reserved for the priests that serve in Jerusalem before the face of our God; the which things it is not lawful for any of the people so much as to touch with their hands.

14 For they have sent some to Jerusalem, because they also that dwell there have done the like, to bring them a licence from the senate.

15 Now when they shall bring them word, they will forthwith do it, and they shall be given thee to be destroyed the same day.

16 Wherefore I thine handmaid, knowing all this, am fled from their presence; and God hath sent me to work things with thee, whereat all the earth shall be astonished, and whosoever shall hear it.

17 For thy servant is religious, and serveth the God of heaven day and night: now therefore, my lord, I will remain with thee, and thy servant,

under penalty of death in Lev. xvii. 10—14. The people were driven to commit it by extremity of hunger in the time of Saul (1 Sam. xiv. 31—34.).

13. "To spend." The word means "to consume," or "eat," as it is used of "consuming or devouring fire," in Deut. v. 25. To eat holy things which had been offered to God would have been generally an act of sacrilege, but in a case of extremity it might be justified, as when David and his men took of the "shewbread" (St. Matt. xii. 3, 4.).

14. "To bring them a licence." Perhaps the meaning is, that the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem granted them the same liberty as they would have had in a foreign land, where compliance with all the rites and customs of the Law would have been impossible (Hos. ix. 3, 4.). Or the "licence" might be a remission of offerings, and other sacred tribute, which was due to the Temple or the priests, like the "release" in Esth. ii. 18. But incidents are not wanting in Jewish history in which legal observances were modified in times of war to meet cases of necessity, as in 1 Macc. ii. 38—41. Lam. i. 7.

16. "To work things with thee." Her words are ambiguous, as above, vv. 6, 7. The thing which she inwardly purposed to work was the destruction of Holofernes.

17. "Religious." Or, "I thine handmaid fear God," and worship Him. The same word is found in Exod. xviii. 21. Job i. 1, "One that feared God."

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will go out by night into the valley, and I will pray unto God, and he will tell me when they have committed their sins :

18 and I will come and shew it unto thee : then thou shalt go forth with all thine army, and there shall be none of them that shall resist thee.

19 And I will lead thee through the midst of Judea, until thou come before Jerusalem ; and I will set thy throne in the midst thereof ; and thou shalt drive them as sheep that have no shepherd, and ^ba dog shall not so much as ²open his mouth at thee : for ³these things were told me according to my foreknowledge, and they were declared unto me, and I am sent to tell thee.

^b Ex. 11. 7.
² Or, bark.
³ Or, these things have I spoken.

20 Then her words pleased Holofernes and all his servants ; and they marvelled at her wisdom, and said,

21 There is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other, both for beauty of face, and wisdom of words.

22 Likewise Holofernes said unto her, God hath done well to send thee before the people, that strength might be in our hands, and destruction upon them that lightly regard my lord.

23 And now thou art both beautiful in thy

“He will tell me” On the supposition that the Jews had displeased God, so that He withdrew his protection from them, they would fall an easy prey to the Assyrian host.

19. “As sheep that have no shepherd.” Or, an army whose leader is slain, as in 1 Kin. xxii. 17. Such in Judith’s intention the Assyrians were soon to be. Such were the Philistines when their champion had fallen (1 Sam. xvii. 51, 52.).

“A dog shall not so much as open his mouth.” So, in Exod. xi. 7, the Israelites and their cattle were so secure, that not even a dog barked at them. Judith said this in confident assurance that God would not show her that the Jews had sinned or forfeited His favour ; and that He would grant their deliverance to her prayers, and to the supplications of the priests.

“According to my foreknowledge.” In the Vulgate: “These things are told me by the Providence of God.”

20—23. Holofernes, who by his courage and ferocity had been the terror of so many nations, is here represented as being completely overcome by the fascination of a talented and beautiful woman. So Samson’s invincible strength yielded to the importunity of Delilah (Judg.

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countenance, and witty in thy words: surely if thou do as thou hast spoken, thy God shall be my God, and thou shalt dwell in the house of king Nabuchodonosor, and shalt be renowned through the whole earth.

CHAPTER XII.

2 Judith will not eat of Holofernes' meat. 7 She tarried three days in the camp, and every night went forth to pray. 13 Bagoas doth move her to be merry with Holofernes, 20 who for joy of her company drank much.

THEN he commanded to bring her in where his plate was set; and bade that they should prepare for her of his own meats, and that she should drink of his own wine.

2 And Judith said, I ^awill not eat thereof, lest there be an offence: but provision shall be made for me of the things that I have brought.

^a Gen. 43. 32.
Dan. 1. 8.
Tobit 1. 11.

3 Then Holofernes said unto her, If thy provision should fail, how should we give thee the like? for there be none with us of thy nation.

4 Then said Judith unto him, As thy soul liveth, my lord, thine handmaid shall not spend those things that I have, before the Lord work by mine hand the things that he hath determined.

5 Then the servants of Holofernes brought her into the tent, and she slept till midnight, and she arose when it was toward the morning watch,

6 and sent to Holofernes, saying, Let my lord

xvi. 16, 17.). See also 1 Esdr. iv. 18, 19, 26, 27. It is an influence to which the greatest and wisest of men have yielded themselves in soul and body. See Eccus. xlvii. 13, 14, 19; ix. 2. 8.

CHAPTER XII.

1. "His plate." Silver vessels, or "treasures" (*Vulgate*), mentioned below (xv. 11.). The closet, or inner chamber, was used as a private apartment for women as well as a hidingplace or storeroom. See 1 Kin. vii. 8; xx. 30; xxii. 25. Judg. xv. 1. Esth. ii. 3.

2. "Lest there be an offence." A snare or a stumblingblock to my soul. Compare Wisd. xiv. 11. In the *Vulgate*, "lest sin come upon me." She would not defile herself with the unclean meats of the Gentiles, lest she lose the favour of God, and thus frustrate her enterprise.

"Provision shall be made." In the Syriac: "That which hath come with me shall suffice me."

now command that thine handmaid may go forth unto prayer.

7 Then Holofernes commanded his guard that they should not stay her: thus she abode in the camp three days, and went out in the night into the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself in a fountain of water by the camp.

8 And when she came out, she besought the Lord God of Israel to direct her way to the raising up of the children of her people.

9 So she came in clean, and remained in the tent, until she did eat her meat at evening.

10 And in the fourth day Holofernes made a feast to his own servants only, and called none of the officers to the banquet.

11 Then said he to Bagoas the eunuch, who had charge over all that he had, Go now, and persuade this Hebrew woman which is with thee, that she come unto us, and eat and drink with us.

6. "Go forth unto prayer." Her object was twofold: to seek Divine help in her daring and perilous enterprise, and in order that after she had accomplished it she might obtain free permission to return to Bethulia, under pretext of resorting to her accustomed place of devotion.

7. "Three days." Thus the five days within which the deliverance was expected (viii. 15, 33.) would be completed.

"Washed herself." Ablutions before prayer, though expressly enjoined to the priests only (Exod. xxx. 17—21.), were generally practised by the Jews. Hence they selected sites for their prosenchæ, or oratories, by the sea, or on the banks of rivers (Acts xvi. 13.). The fountain used by Judith was within the ground occupied by the Assyrian camp. See vii. 6, 7.

8. "The raising up." Her own people were to be lifted up, by the pride or arrogance of the Assyrians being broken. See xiii. 4.

"Way" is used here for "enterprise," as in Ps. xxxvii. 5. Josh. i. 8.

9. "Eat her meat." Until she was induced by hunger, after her long abstinence, to eat. The same word is used in Wisd. xvi. 21, "the appetite of the eater." She fasted to increase her desires in prayer, and in order that her provisions might not be spent before the day when the deed was to be done.

10. "None of the officers." Literally, "None of those who were set over his business." Those whom he usually consulted on matters of importance were not invited to this "business" of the banquet, Holofernes being ashamed to betray his weakness to them, or jealous of their presence when he declared his passion. Hence he restricts the en-

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12 For, lo, it will be a shame for our person, if we shall let such a woman go, not having had her company; for if we draw her not unto us, she will laugh us to scorn.

13 Then went Bagoas from the presence of Holofernes, and came to her, and he said, Let not this fair damsel fear to come to my lord, and to be honoured in his presence, and drink wine, and be merry with us, and be made this day as one of the daughters of the Assyrians, which serve in the house of Nabuchodonosor.

14 Then said Judith unto him, Who am I now, that I should gainsay my lord? surely whatsoever pleaseth him I will do speedily, and it shall be my joy unto the day of my death.

15 So she arose, and decked herself with her apparel and all her woman's attire, and her maid went and laid soft skins on the ground for her over against Holofernes, which she had received of Bagoas for her daily use, that she might sit and eat upon them.

16 Now when Judith came in and sat down, Holofernes his heart was ravished with her, and his mind was moved, and he desired greatly her

tainment to his eunuchs and chamberlains. The phrase occurs in 1 Macc. x. 37; xiii. 37.

11. "Bagoas." This was perhaps a general name for a chamberlain or eunuch, the same as Hege or Hegai in Esth. ii. 3, 8.

12. "It will be a shame." In the Vulgate, "It is looked upon as "shameful among the Assyrians," as if their gross licentiousness had become a law or custom amongst them, so that they gloried in their shame (Jer. vi. 15. Is. iii. 9. Phil. iii. 19.). Such wickedness brings its own recompence by depriving men of ordinary prudence, so that they go of their own accord into the snare that is laid for them (Prov. vii. 22, 23. Ecclus. xviii. 30, 31.).

14. "Whatsoever pleaseth him." She flatters him with the hope that she would consent to become his wife, and that she would account it an honour and promotion to have so great a prince for her husband.

15. "Soft skins," or "fleeces," used for sitting or reclining. Sheepskins and goatskins were used for pillows or litters. At meals they would sit or recline on these litters, the table being but slightly elevated above the ground (Esth. vii. 8.).

16. "The heart of Holofernes was smitten." He was beside himself (*Greek*), and was thus completely taken in the snare that was laid for him (Ecclus. ix. 8.).

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company; for he waited a time to deceive her, from the day that he had seen her.

17 Then said Holofernes unto her, Drink now, and be merry with us.

18 So Judith said, I will drink now, my lord, because my life is magnified in me this day more than all the days since I was born.

19 Then she took and ate and drank before him what her maid had prepared.

20 And Holofernes took great delight in her, and drank much more wine than he had drunk at any time in one day since he was born.

CHAPTER XIII.

2 Judith is left alone with Holofernes in his tent. 4 She prayeth God to give her strength. 8 She cut off his head while he slept, 10 and returned with it to Bethulia. 17 They saw it, and commend her.

NOW when the evening was come, his servants made haste to depart, and Bagoas shut his tent without, and dismissed the waiters from the presence of his lord; and they went to their beds: for they were all weary, because the feast had been long.

18. "I will drink now." She was not accepting the food and wine which he offered, nor was she entertained as his guest. She partook of her own provision at a separate table, in order to be strengthened after her fast for her arduous and perilous enterprise. She drinks in his presence to disarm him of all suspicion, and to provoke him to indulge in wine and sleep, and thus to fall an easy victim to her design against his life (2 Sam. xiii. 28.).

20. "At any time in one day." Some copies omit this, which may be added as a gloss for explanation. He was so overcome by drink that Judith escaped his designs, and was able to accomplish her purpose whilst she retained her chastity. The luxury and excess of the Assyrians and Chaldeans was condemned by Habakkuk (ii. 5.). See also Dan. v. 1, 4. Eccus. xix. 2; xxxi. 25—29; and below, xiii. 15, 16.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. "Made haste to depart." To sleep off the effects of the carouse, and to escape observation or derision on account of its effects upon them. The "servants" were the guests at the feast (xii. 10.); the "waiters" were the "attendants," who stood by their master, awaiting his orders. These were now "shut out" from the tent, as their services were no longer required.

"To their beds." They went each to his tent (*Syriac*), for they were

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2 And Judith was left alone in the tent, and Holofernes lying along upon his bed: for he was filled with ^a wine.

^a Ecclus. 31.
20, 25.

3 Now Judith had commanded her maid to stand without her bedchamber, and to wait for her coming forth, as she did daily: for she said she would go forth to her prayers, and she spake to Bagoas according to the same purpose.

4 So all went forth, and none was left in the bedchamber, neither little nor great. Then Judith, standing by his bed, said in her heart, O Lord God of all power, look at this present upon the works of mine hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem.

5 For now is the time to help thine inheritance, and to execute mine enterprizes to the destruction of the enemies which are risen against us.

6 Then she came to the pillar of the bed, which was at Holofernes' head, and took down his fauchion from thence,

all "overcharged with wine." The result was, that those who acted as body-guards to Holofernes were detached from him, or buried in a deep sleep, so that there was none to watch by his tent or to raise an alarm when Judith attacked him. See Jer. li. 39, 57.

2. "He was filled." Overpowered or overcharged with wine, and thus rendered stupid and helpless.

3. "To stand without." To guard against discovery, by giving alarm if any one should approach the tent.

4. "Said in her heart." Vulgate: "She prayed with tears and the motion of her lips in silence." She paused, as being conscious of her weakness, though she never wavered in her resolution.

"The works of mine hands." Vulgate: "Look on the works of mine hands, that as Thou hast promised, Thou mayst raise up Jerusalem, Thy city, and that I may bring to pass that which I have purposed, having a belief that it might be done by Thee." See xv. 9; xvi. 8.

5. "To help thine inheritance." The word rendered "help" occurs in St. Luke i. 54, and is supposed to include the idea of "restoration to favour:" God, Who had been displeased with His inheritance, now receives His people back to favour, and grants them His aid (*Suicer*). See also Ps. cii. 13.

6. "The pillar," or "bed-post." The Greek word occurs in the LXX. Version of Micah vii. 4: "like a moth eating and crawling upon a post." It is conjectured that it was a transverse rod connecting the two upright bed-posts, and that the canopy or mosquito-net, as well as the dagger, was suspended from it.

"His fauchion." The Greek word is said to mean "a crooked sword," or a "Persian sword girded upon the thigh." In the Syriac, "she drew the dagger from its sheath." In the Vulgate, "she loosed

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7 and approached to his bed, and took hold of the hair of his head, and said, Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, this day.

8 And she smote twice upon his neck with all her might, and she took away his head from him,

9 and tumbled his body down from the bed, and pulled down the canopy from the pillars; and anon after she went forth, and gave Holofernes his head to her maid;

"the sword which hung tied upon the pillar." It was perhaps a "scimitar," such as the Turks employed in later times.

7. "The hair of his head." The Assyrians probably wore their hair long, like the Persians. She grasped his hair with her left hand, that the blow she gave with the dagger might take surer effect.

8. "She took away his head from him." Thus to meet with his death at the hands of a weak woman was an ignominious end for a man whose name had been a terror to the nations. So Abimelech died at Thebez (Judg. ix. 52—56.); and Sisera in Judg. iv. 21. In a similar way Attila, King of the Huns, "the scourge of God," is said to have perished.

Assassination, or smiting an enemy secretly (Deut. xxvii. 24.), was a crime regarded with abhorrence by all men, even by heathen; but in Judith it was an act of fanaticism, or misguided zeal. She supposed that she was acting by Divine instigation, and the helplessness to which Holofernes had reduced himself was regarded by her as a sign that God had delivered him into her hands. She conceived that she was executing vengeance upon an enemy of God, and that her act was justifiable as a retribution for all the cruelties of Holofernes (1 Sam. xv. 33.), and a prevention of further cruelties, and especially a means of rescuing the Temple of God from profanation and sacrilege. So Ehud assassinated Eglon (Judg. iii. 16, 20, 21.); and Jael slew Sisera in her tent (Judg. iv. 21.). Though they both died by treacherous means, it appears to have been a just vengeance that overtook them. The end of Holofernes was the just punishment of a proud, cruel, and licentious prince. It was not a triumph of chastity, faith, or devotion, in the woman who slew him, as some ancient writers represented it.

9. "Tumbled his body." "She rolled away the headless body or "trunk" (*Vulgate*). The old meaning of the verb "tumble" was "to roll." So Shakespeare, "a little snow, *tumbled* about, anon be-
"comes a mountain." Judith's object was to leave the trunk where the spectacle would most horrify the Assyrians.

"Pulled down the canopy." She removed the net or curtains,—perhaps including the rod or bar mentioned above, ver. 6,—from the pillars or bed-posts. She took the canopy with her to exhibit it to her people (ver. 15, below), and thus to certify them that the head was that of the prince himself, and not of one of his servants. For the canopy was of rich material, and adorned with gold ornaments and jewels (above, x. 21.).

"And anon;" that is, after a short interval or respite, during which

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10 and she put it in her bag of meat: so they twain went together according to their custom unto prayer: and when they passed the camp, they compassed the valley, and went up the mountain of Bethulia, and came to the gates thereof.

11 Then said Judith afar off to the watchmen at the gate, Open, open now the gate: God, even our God, is with us, to shew his power yet in Jerusalem, and his forces against the enemy, as he hath even done this day.

12 Now when the men of her city heard her voice, they made haste to go down to the gate of their city, and they called the elders of the city.

13 And then they ran all together, both small and great, for it was strange unto them that she was come: so they opened the gate, and received them, and made a fire for a light, and stood round about them.

14 Then she said to them with a loud voice, Praise, praise God, praise God, I say, for he hath not taken away his mercy from the house of Israel, but hath destroyed our enemies by mine hands this night.

15 So she took the head out of the bag, and shewed it, and said unto them, Behold the head of

she recovered her breath, or wiped off any stains of blood that adhered to her, or paused to offer a prayer or thanksgiving. "Anon" was an old adverb, with the same meaning as "soon." In St. Matt. xiii. 20. St. Mark i. 30, it is put for "immediately;" here it means, "after a short pause or delay."

10. "In her bag of meats," or "wallet," which had contained her provision, but was now empty.

13. "It was strange unto them." It was contrary to their expectations. The same word occurs in Wisd. v. 2. "They had now no hopes that she would come" (*Vulgate*). Their expectation was that she would be detained a captive by the Assyrians.

"Made a fire." In the *Vulgate*: "and lighting up lights they all gathered round about her; and she went up to a higher place, and commanded silence to be made."

14. "Praise, praise." Judith's name denotes "praise;" but she claims the praise for God, and not for herself.

"He hath not taken away his mercy." The phrase is taken from 2 Sam. vii. 15. In the *Vulgate*: "He hath fulfilled His mercy which He promised to the house of Israel," as in St. Luke i. 54, 55, 72.

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Holofernes, the chief captain of the army of Assur, and behold the canopy, wherein he did lie in his drunkenness ; and the Lord hath smitten him by the hand of a woman.

16 As the Lord liveth, who hath kept me in my way that I went, my countenance hath deceived him to his destruction, and yet hath he not committed sin with me, to defile and shame me.

17 Then all the people were wonderfully astonished, and bowed themselves, and worshipped God, and said with one accord, Blessed be thou, O our God, which hast this day brought to nought the enemies of thy people.

18 Then said Ozias unto her, O daughter, blessed art thou of the most high God above all the women upon the earth ; and blessed be the Lord God, which hath created the heavens and the earth, which hath directed thee to the cutting off of the head of the chief of our enemies.

19 For this thy confidence shall not depart from

15. "By the hand of a woman." The circumstances under which he had fallen under her power were controlled by the Disposer of all events. See Judg. iv. 9.

16. "As the Lord liveth." The Vulgate adds: "His angel hath been my keeper both going hence and abiding there, and returning from thence hither ; and the Lord hath not suffered His handmaid to be defiled, but hath brought me back to you without pollution of sin, rejoicing for His victory, for my escape, and for your deliverance. Give all of you glory to Him, because He is good, because His mercy endureth for ever." Her words would not of necessity imply any visible angelic appearance or special manifestation of the Divine presence. She only ascribes her success and safety to the Providence of God. See Gen. xxiv. 7.

17. "Bowed themselves, and worshipped." The phrase is taken from Exod. iv. 31 ; xii. 27. In the Syriac, "they prostrated themselves with their faces to the earth."

"Brought to nought." By frustrating their counsels and devices, depriving them of ordinary prudence or caution, and thus bringing them to destruction. See Ps. xxxiii. 10 ; xlv. 7.

18. "Blessed art thou." She should be praised and renowned for her courage and devotion, like Jael in Judg. v. 24. But the phrase is taken rather from Gen. xiv. 19, 20.

"Directed ;" or, "prospered ;" making her enterprise succeed.

"Cutting off." So the Syriac ; but the meaning of the Greek is rather, "to inflict a mortal wound upon the chief of our enemies."

19. "This thy confidence." Either, "the praise of her trust and hope in God should be ever in men's hearts," as the Vulgate and

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the heart of men, which remember the power of God for ever.

20 And God turn these things to thee for a perpetual praise, to visit thee in good things, because thou hast not spared thy life for the affliction of our nation, but hast revenged our ruin, walking a straight way before our God. And all the people said, So be it, so be it.

CHAPTER XIV.

8 *Achior heareth Judith shew what she had done, and is circumcised. 11 The head of Holofernes is hanged up. 15 He is found dead, and much lamented.*

THEN said Judith unto them, Hear me now, my brethren, and take this ^a head, and hang it upon the highest place of your walls. ^a 2 Macc. 15. 35.

2 And so soon as the morning shall appear, and the sun shall come forth upon the earth, take ye every one his weapons, and go forth every valiant man out of the city, and set ye a captain over them, as though ye would go down into the field toward the watch of the Assyrians; but go not down.

Syriac render it; or, "her example should teach men never to abandon "their hope in God" (Ps. xxvii. 1, 3; xli. 1, 2.).

20. "A perpetual praise;" *lit.* "exaltation," and so honour, dignity, or excellency. So the word is used in 1 Macc. i. 40.

"To visit thee." God's visitation is His judgment, in which He punishes the wicked, and delivers the righteous from their enemies and persecutors. See Wisd. iii. 7, 13. Eccus. xviii. 20; ii. 14.

"Thou hast not spared," or withheld, "thy soul or life." She had ventured it in the greatest peril, and had been willing to sacrifice it for her people. So the same word is used in Job xxxiii. 18. Ps. lxxviii. 50. "To spare" is to "withhold," as in Rom. viii. 32. Gen. xxii. 16.

"Revenged our ruin." Or rather, "Thou wentest forth to succour "us in our ruin, or dire extremity," in order that ruin might not overtake us. The people reply, Amen, Amen, as in 1 Chr. xvi. 36.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. "Take this head." So in 2 Macc. xv. 35, the head of Nicanor was hung upon the tower, to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies, and to be a "manifest sign of the help of the Lord." Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 54.

"The highest place." Upon a parapet, battlement, or prominent place, where it would be most conspicuous.

2. As though ye would go down." They were to "rush out, not "as going down beneath, but as making an assault" (*Vulgate*). But it was rather a feint, threatening an attack and not making it. Her advice was that they should wait till the Assyrians were filled with

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3 Then they shall take their armour, and shall go into their camp, and raise up the captains of the army of Assur, and they shall run to the tent of Holofernes, but shall not find him: then fear shall fall upon them, and they shall flee before your face.

4 So ye, and all that inhabit the coast of Israel, shall pursue them, and overthrow them as they go.

5 But before ye do these things, call me Achior the Ammonite, that he may see and know him that despised the house of Israel, and that sent him to us, as it were to his death.

6 Then they called Achior out of the house of Ozias; and when he was come, and saw the head of Holofernes in a man's hand in the assembly of the people, he fell down on his face, and his spirit failed.

7 But when they had recovered him, he fell at Judith's feet, and revered her, and said, Blessed art thou in all the tabernacle of Juda, and in

panic and consternation, and that they should attack them in the confusion that followed.

"Toward the watch." The advanced guard, or nearest outpost of the enemy, as in x. 11.

3. "They shall take their armour." In the Vulgate: "Then the watchmen must needs run to awake their prince for the battle. And when the captains of them shall run to the tent of Holofernes, and shall find him without his head, wallowing in his blood, fear shall fall upon them."

4. "As they go." Ye shall lay them prostrate in the ways, overtaking them in the various paths over which they are dispersed in their flight, before they can rally or recover themselves. "Go after them securely, for the Lord will destroy them under your feet" (*Vulgate*).

6. "They called Achior." The Vulgate adds: "Judith said unto him, The God of Israel, to whom thou gavest testimony that He avengeth Himself of His enemies, He hath cut off the head of all the unbelievers this night by my hand. And that thou mayest find that it is so, behold the head of Holofernes, who in the contempt of his pride despised the God of Israel (vi. 2, &c.), and threatened thee with death, saying, When the people of Israel shall be taken, I will command thy sides to be pierced with a sword." See vi. 6.

"His spirit failed." His soul swooned away (*Vulgate*). The sight was a terrible and unexpected one, though it brought him an assurance of his own personal safety.

7. "In all the tabernacle of Juda." Or, "in every tabernacle of Jacob" (*Vulgate*). The daughters of Juda, in all their tents or habitations, should speak in honour of Judith, or invoke a Divine blessing upon her. The expression is taken from the praise of Jael in Judg. vi. 24, "Blessed shall she be above women in the tent (tabernacle)."

all nations, which hearing thy name shall be astonished.

8 Now therefore tell me all the things that thou hast done in these days. Then Judith declared unto him in the midst of the people all that she had done, from the day that she went forth until that hour she spake unto them.

9 And when she had left off speaking, the people shouted with a loud voice, and made a joyful noise in their city.

10 And when Achior had seen all that the God of Israel had done, he believed in God greatly, and circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and was joined unto the house of Israel unto this day.

11 And as soon as the morning arose, they hanged the head of Holofernes upon the wall, and every man took his weapons, and they went forth by bands unto the ² straits of the mountain.

² Or, *ascents*.

12 But when the Assyrians saw them, they sent to their leaders, which came to their captains and tribunes, and to every one of their rulers.

“Astonished;” or rather, “they shall be troubled, filled with dismay or consternation.”

10. “Believed in God.” “Leaving the religion of the Gentiles,” (*Vulgate*), and becoming a proselyte.

11. “By bands,” or companies, sallying forth through the gates of the city. The *Vulgate* adds: “They went out with a great noise and shouting.”

“The straits.” The ascents or steep places of the mountains.

12. “Leaders.” These were the inferior officers of the army, who received orders from the captains and tribunes, or (more literally) “the generals and heads of thousands” (*Num.* i. 16.).

The *Vulgate* has here: “The watchmen seeing this, ran to the tent of Holofernes. And they that were in the tent came and made a noise before the door of the chamber to awake him, endeavouring by art to break his rest, that Holofernes might awake, not by their calling him, but by their noise. For no man durst knock or open and go into the chamber of the general of the Assyrians. But when his captains and tribunes were come, and all the chiefs of the army of the Assyrians, they said to the chamberlains, Go in and awake him; for the mice coming out of their holes have presumed to challenge us to fight.” The last expression may be taken from 1 Sam. xiv. 11, where the Philistines say, “Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.” The enemies of the Israelites despised them, as if they had been a weak and timid people, fearful of encountering them in open warfare.

13 So they came to Holofernes' tent, and said to him that had the charge of all his things, Waken now our lord : for the slaves have been bold to come down against us to battle, that they may be utterly destroyed.

14 Then went in Bagoas, and knocked at the door of the tent ; for he thought that he had slept with Judith.

15 But because none answered, he opened it, and went into the bedchamber, and found him cast upon the floor dead, and his head was taken from him.

2 Then.

16 ² Therefore he cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and sighing, and a mighty cry, and rent his garments.

17 After he went into the tent where Judith lodged : and when he found her not, he leaped out to the people, and cried,

18 These slaves have dealt treacherously ; one woman of the Hebrews hath brought shame upon the house of king Nabuchodonosor : for, behold, Holofernes *lieth* upon the ground without a head.

19 When the captains of the Assyrians' army heard these words, they rent their coats, and their minds were wonderfully troubled, and there was a cry and a very great noise throughout the camp.

14. "Then went in Bagoas," &c. The Vulgate adds: "He stood before the curtain, and made a clapping with his hands;" and again, "When with hearkening he perceived no motion of one lying, he came near to the curtain, and lifting it up, he saw the body of Holofernes without the head, weltering in his blood."

15. "Upon the floor." The Greek word means a threshold or step, or a tortoise-shaped footstool by which the bed was ascended. Holofernes is described as surrounding himself with an array of princely state and splendour ; and the curtain may have been used to conceal him from view when he gave an audience to his men without admitting them to his presence.

18. "These slaves have dealt treacherously;" or, have "rebelled against their lords" (*Syriac*). The words are found in the LXX. Version of 1 Sam. xiii. 3, where Saul is made to say, "Our slaves have revolted," instead of "Let the Hebrews hear."

"Without a head." In the Greek, "and his head is not upon him."

19. "The Assyrian army was greatly dismayed and thrown into confusion, and there was a great cry and clamour in the midst of the camp."

JUDITH, XV.

CHAPTER XV.

1 *The Assyrians are chased and slain.* 8 *The high priest cometh to see Judith.* 11 *The stuff of Holofernes is given to Judith.* 13 *The women crown her with a garland.*

AND when they that were in the tents heard, they were astonished at the thing that was done.

2 And fear and trembling fell upon them, so that there was no man that durst abide in the sight of his neighbour, but rushing out all together, they fled into every way of the plain, and of the hill country.

3 They also that had camped in the mountains round about Bethulia fled away. Then the children of Israel, every one that was a warrior among them, rushed out upon them.

4 Then sent Ozias to Betomasthem, and to Bebai, and Chobai, and Cola, and to all the coasts of Israel, such as should tell the things that were done, and that all should rush forth upon their enemies to destroy them.

5 Now when the children of Israel heard it, they all fell upon them with one consent, and slew them

CHAPTER XV.

1. "Heard" that their general had been killed. So the Vulgate: "When all the army heard that Holofernes was beheaded, courage and counsel fled from them." They were bewildered and filled with consternation. There was "trembling in the host" (1 Sam. xiv. 15.). They were seized with a panic, like the Syrians in 2 Kin. vii. 7, or Sennacherib in 2 Kin. xix. 7. According to the proverb, they were as sheep having no shepherd (1 Kin. xxii. 17.), without courage or presence of mind to choose a new leader.

2. "In the sight of his neighbour." In the Vulgate: "No one spoke to his neighbour, but hanging down the head, leaving all things behind, they made haste to escape." There was no attempt at consultation, or to rally for the battle. The description is partly derived from 2 Kin. vii. 10, 15.

"Rushing out." They poured out and dispersed in flight, as if their enemies were already in the midst of them. Or, they were afraid of one another, and confounded friend and foe. See 2 Macc. xii. 22.

3. "Rushed out." They made a sally in pursuit, and thus the conquerors were also dispersed. The Vulgate adds, that they went "sounding with trumpets and shouting after them." See 1 Macc. iv. 13—23.

4. "To Betomasthem," &c. See above, iv. 4, 6.

5. "And slew them," or "smote them," killing some, and wounding

unto Chobai: likewise also they that came from Jerusalem, and from all the hill country, (for men had told them what things were done in the camp of their enemies,) and they that were in Galaad, and in Galilee, ²chased them with a great slaughter, until they were past Damascus and the borders thereof.

² Or,
overcame.

6 And the residue, that dwelt at Bethulia, fell upon the camp of Assur, and spoiled them, and were greatly enriched.

7 And the children of Israel that returned from the slaughter had that which remained; and the villages and the cities, that were in the mountains and in the plain, gat many spoils: for the multitude was very great.

8 Then Joacim the high priest, and the ancients of the children of Israel that dwelt in Jerusalem, came to behold the good things that God had shewed to Israel, and to see Judith, and to salute her.

9 And when they came unto her, they blessed her

and disabling others. So in Exod. xvii. 13, "Joshua discomfited," weakened, or disabled, "Amalek with the edge of the sword." Compare 2 Macc. viii. 24.

"Chased them;" *lit.* "overcame them with horns," and hence was derived, perhaps, the idea of the "trumpets" in the Vulgate above; but the meaning is rather that they "outflanked" them, and thus arrested their flight, and cut off their retreat. In this sense the word is used in 1 Macc. vii. 46.

6. "Were greatly enriched." With booty and captives (*Syriac*). In the Vulgate: "They took away the spoils which the Assyrians had left in their flight, and were laden exceedingly."

7. "Had that which remained." The *Syriac* has: "They took possession of the remainder of the cities in the mountains and valleys." In the Vulgate: "They brought with them all things that were theirs, so that there was no numbering their cattle and beasts and all their moveables, insomuch that from the least to the greatest all were made rich by their spoils." Compare 1 Macc. iv. 23.

"And cities;" or, according to another reading, "their homesteads," or "smaller settlements."

8. "Came;" that is, "from Jerusalem to Bethulia" (*Vulgate*). The High Priest was accompanied by the elders of the Jewish Sanhedrin, "the senate of the children of Israel" (*Greek*).

"The good things." "The great deliverance which God had worked for Israel." Compare 1 Macc. iv. 55. They saw in it the answer to their prayers (above, iv. 9, &c.).

9. "When they came unto her." In the Vulgate: "When she

with one accord, and said unto her, Thou art the exaltation of Jerusalem, thou art the great glory of Israel, thou art the great rejoicing of our nation :

10 thou hast done all these things by thine hand : thou hast done much good to Israel, and God is pleased therewith : blessed be thou of the Almighty Lord for evermore. And all the people said, So be it.

11 And the people spoiled the camp the space of thirty days : and they gave unto Judith Holofernes

“was come out to him.” She is represented as coming forth from her abode, to receive the blessing of the High Priest. The Bethulians had already asked a blessing upon her, in gratitude for their own deliverance (xiv. 7.) ; now the High Priest bestows a further blessing, in acknowledgement of the deliverance of the Temple from profanation by the heathen.

“The exaltation.” As in xiii. 4 ; xvi. 8, meaning that Jerusalem had been exalted or raised up from its prostrate condition of grief and terror, when threatened with destruction by the Assyrian host.

10. “Thou hast done much good,” &c. “Thou hast conferred benefits upon Israel, and hast done them good ; and may God be well pleased therein !” Either praying for the Divine approval, or inferring from the success of her enterprise that God had approved it. In the Vulgate : “Thou hast done manfully, and thy heart has been strengthened, because thou hast loved chastity, and after thy husband hast not known any other ; therefore also the hand of the Lord hath strengthened thee.” This seems to be a reflection of the Latin translator, for there is nothing like it in the Greek. His object was to exhibit the contrast between the mighty and terrible Assyrian prince, rendered effeminate by his luxury and licentiousness, and the weak woman, armed through her chastity with masculine or superhuman courage.

11. “Thirty days.” In the Vulgate : “Thirty days were scarce sufficient for the people of Israel to gather up the spoils of the Assyrians.” The Syriac alters the number to “three whole days,” which would be exactly the time of the spoiling of the camp of the Ammonites and Moabites by Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. xx. 25.) : “When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away : and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.” See also 1 Macc. iv. 23. Zech. xiv. 14.

“They gave unto Judith,” &c. In the Vulgate : “All those things that were proved to be the peculiar goods of Holofernes, they gave to Judith, in gold and silver, and garments and precious stones, and all household stuff.”

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his tent, and all his plate, and beds, and vessels, and all his stuff: and she took it, and laid it on her mule; and made ready her carts, and laid them thereon.

12 Then all the women of Israel ran together to see her, and blessed her, and made a dance among them for her: and she took branches in her hand, and gave also to the women that were with her.

13 And they put a garland of olive upon her and her maid that was with her, and she went before all the people in the dance, leading all the women: and all the men of Israel followed in their armour with garlands, and with songs in their mouths.

CHAPTER XVI.

¹ *The song of Judith.* ¹⁹ *She dedicateth the stuff of Holofernes.* ²³ *She died at Bethulia a widow of great honour.* ²⁴ *All Israel did lament her death.*

THEN Judith began to sing this thanksgiving in all Israel, and all the people sang after her ² this song of praise.

² Or, *this praising.*

“His plate.” Vessels of silver, as in xii. 1.

“And vessels.” The Syriac has, “beasts of burden.” But the Greek word signifies “large bowls or goblets.”

“Stuff;” or, “works of art.” The word occurs in Ecclus. xxxii. 6 for “a work of gold.”

“Her carts.” Mules and waggons formed part of her wealth, mentioned above, viii. 7.

12. “Made a dance.” In the Syriac, “she chose from amongst them “a choir of singers.”

“She took branches.” The Greek word is “thyrsos,” which properly means a staff wreathed with ivy and crowned with a fir cone, which was carried in the processions of Bacchus. The Jews applied the word to the boughs used in their own religious festivities, especially at the feast of tabernacles. See 2 Macc. x. 7. The Syriac has, “branches “of palms.”

13. “They put a garland;” or, according to another reading, “She “crowned herself with an olive wreath, and the women that were “with her did likewise.”

CHAPTER XVI.

1. “Began to sing;” that is, Judith originated the sacred song, and the others responded, or repeated her words. So in Exod. xv. 21, “Miriam answered them.” See also 1 Sam. xviii. 7.

“Sang after her.” They sang under her guidance or direction, or as she taught or dictated.

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2 And Judith said, Begin unto my God with timbrels, sing unto my Lord with cymbals: tune unto him a ²new psalm: exalt him, and call upon ²Or, *psalm and praise.* his name.

3 For God breaketh the battles: for among the camps in the midst of the people he hath delivered me out of the hands of them that persecuted me.

4 Assur came out of the mountains from the north, ^ach. 2. 19. he came with ten thousands of his army, the ^amultitude whereof stopped the torrents, and their horsemen have covered the hills.

5 He bragged that he would burn up my borders, and kill my young men with the sword, and dash the sucking children against the ground, and make mine infants as a prey, and my virgins as a spoil.

2. "Tune;" that is, "adapt to a strain of music a psalm and hymn of praise." The timbrels and cymbals *began*, by rehearsing the tune to which the hymn was to be chanted.

3. "Breaketh the battles;" or, "putteth an end to wars." See ix. 7. 2 Macc. xii. 28. The expression is taken from the LXX. Version of Exod. xv. 3, "The Lord is a man of war." See also Ps. lxxvi. 3.

"Among the camps;" or, "He encamps in the midst of His people to deliver us from the hand of the oppressors." (So the *Vulgate* and *Syriac*.) Compare Zech. ix. 8, "I will encamp about Mine house because of the army."

4. "Assur;" that is, the Assyrian army, which contained many myriads (ii. 5.), and was augmented by allies and auxiliaries on the march (ii. 20.). Invaders coming from the East usually entered Palestine on its northern frontier, and were thus said to come "from the north" (Jer. i. 13, 14, 15; iii. 18; iv. 6; vi. 1.). So the Jewish captives returned "out of the north country" (Jer. xxiii. 8.).

"Stopped the torrents." To deprive the besieged of their supply of water (ii. 19. Is. xxxvii. 25.).

5. "He bragged." In the Greek, "He said." He promised himself an easy victory, like Pharaoh and the Egyptians in Exod. xv. 9, "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil." See ii. 11, 12. Judg. v. 30.

"Burn up my borders." As he had done to the inhabitants of Damascus, and Midian (ii. 26, 27.).

"Against the ground;" *lit.* against "the foundation," floor, or pavement. The word occurs in Is. xxv. 12; xxvi. 5. Instead of

6 But the Almighty Lord hath disappointed them by the hand of a woman.

7 For the mighty one did not fall by the young men, neither did the sons of the Titans smite him, nor high giants set upon him: but Judith the daughter of Merari weakened him with the beauty of her countenance.

8 For she put off the garment of her widowhood for the exaltation of those that were oppressed in Israel, and anointed her face with ointment, and bound her hair in a ²tire, and took a linen garment to deceive him.

9 Her sandals ravished his eyes, her beauty took his mind prisoner, and the fauchion passed through his neck.

10 The Persians quaked at her boldness, and the Medes were ³daunted at her hardiness.

³ Or, *confounded*. 11 Then my afflicted shouted for joy, and my weak ones cried aloud; but ⁴they were astonished: these lifted up their voices, but they were overthrown.

⁴ *the Assyrians*.

the clause about the children and infants, the Syriac has, "that he "would deliver the boys into captivity." See ii. 9, 27.

6. "Disappointed." Defeated or frustrated their devices (Ps. xxxiii. 10.). In the Vulgate, "the Almighty Lord hath struck him."

7. "The sons of the Titans." The name "Titans," or "Giants," was applied by the Greeks to men of extraordinary strength and stature, called in the Hebrew Nephilim, Rephaim, or Anakim (2 Sam. v. 18; xxiii. 13. Num. xiii. 33. Deut. i. 28.). See also Wisd. xiv. 6. Ecclus. xvi. 7; xlvii. 4. Baruch iii. 26.

"Weakened." He was infatuated or deluded, so that his ordinary prudence or presence of mind forsook him.

8. "For the exaltation." To bring them comfort, hope, and joy in their mourning and affliction. Therefore she put on her ornaments (x. 3, 4.), and bound up her tresses with a "mitre" or headband.

9. "The fauchion." The dagger or scimitar of Holofernes, (xiii. 6.).

10. "Persians." The army of Holofernes included various allies and auxiliaries, Medes and Persians, and others who had joined his standard.

11. "My weak ones." By a slight alteration in the Greek the verse would run thus: "Then my lowly ones shouted in triumph. "and they that despise me were terrified and astonished." The general sense of the passage is, "that the great host of the enemy was put to flight by a woman and a half-starved garrison." "The camp of the

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12 The sons of the damsels have pierced them through, and wounded them as fugitives' children: they perished by the battle of the Lord.

13 I will sing unto the Lord ²a new song: O Lord, ²Or, a song of praise.
thou art great and glorious, wonderful in strength, and invincible.

14 Let all creatures serve thee: for thou spakest, and they were made, thou didst send forth thy spirit, and it created them, and there is none that can resist thy voice.

15 For the mountains shall be moved from their foundations with the waters, the rocks shall melt as wax at thy presence: yet thou art merciful to them that fear thee.

16 For all sacrifice is too little for a sweet savour unto thee, and all the fat is not sufficient for thy burnt offering: but he that feareth the Lord is great at all times.

"Assyrians howled, when my lowly ones appeared parched with thirst" (*Vulgate*).

13. "The sons of the damsels" . . . "fugitives' children." These expressions occur in the LXX. of 1 Sam. xx. 30, "Thou son of fugitive 'handmaidens.'" There may be an allusion to Jonathan's might in smiting the Philistines. The meaning is, that those whom they despised as slaves and runaways pierced them through and wounded them. So the Egyptians accounted the Israelites as fugitives or runaways, Wisd. xix. 2, 3.

13. This verse is a paraphrase of Exod. xv. 11, "glorious in holiness, 'fearful in praises, doing wonders.'"

"Invincible;" or, "that cannot be surpassed or excelled," as in Exodus, "Who is like unto Thee?" (Ps. lxxvii. 13.).

14. "Let all creatures;" or, "all Thy creation," especially "all 'nations whom Thou hast made'" (Ps. lxxxvi. 9.). The rest of the verse is taken from Ps. xxxiii. 9; civ. 30.

"And it created;" *lit.* "built them up." See Heb. iii. 4.

"Thy voice;" that is, "Thy commandment." So in Num. ix. 20, the Israelites journey according to the commandment, *lit.* "the mouth," or "voice of the Lord."

15. "The mountains." This is taken from Is. lxiv. 1, 2. Compare also Ps. xcvii. 5. The mountains may be types of great hosts or empires, which vanish before the consuming fire of God's wrath.

"Thou art merciful;" that is, in forgiving their sins, and being propitious to them. The same word occurs in Ps. ciii. 3. His mercy is the more magnified, because His judgments are so terrible and irresistible.

16. "All sacrifice." This is taken from Is. xl. 16. In ver. 15, God is said to be propitious to them that fear Him; here He is said

17 Woe to the nations that rise up against my kindred! the Lord Almighty will take vengeance of them in the day of judgment, in putting fire and worms in their flesh; and they shall feel them, and weep for ever.

18 Now as soon as they entered into Jerusalem, they worshipped the Lord; and as soon as the people were purified, they offered their burnt offerings, and their free offerings, and their gifts.

19 Judith also dedicated all the stuff of Holofernes, which the people had given her, and gave the canopy, which she had taken out of his bedchamber, for a gift unto the Lord.

to be not propitiated by sacrifices, which are of little account in His sight as compared with inward reverence and obedience.

"Great." And of great price in the sight of God. Eccus. x. 24; xxv. 10.

17. "Fire and worms." The vengeance upon the enemies of God and His people, foretold in Zech. xiv. 12. Is. lxvi. 14—16, 24.

"They shall feel them, and weep for ever." Perhaps the reading should be, "they shall burn in sensible torment for ever," as in the Syriac and Vulgate. So in Rev. xiv. 10, 11, the worshippers of the beast are said to be tormented with fire and brimstone, and "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." They have no rest day nor night, because "their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched" (Is. lxvi. 24.). Their portion is to "dwell in torments" (2 Esdras ix. 9.). Here, as in 2 Macc. vi. 12—15, it is inferred that if God afflicts His own people and chastens them for their sins, His enemies shall feel His wrath hereafter in far heavier judgments, and calamities for which there is no remedy. See Prov. xi. 31. St. Luke xxiii. 31.

18. "Were purified." They were purged by ablutions from any defilements which they had contracted in the slaughter, or from handling the spoils of the Gentile camp. So the spoils of Midian were purified with the water of separation, or by fire, in Num. xxxi. 21—24.

"Free offerings." These were the thank-offerings for the victory, perhaps taken from the spoils, and given to the Levites and the poor, as in 2 Macc. viii. 28—30. Compare also "the Lord's tribute," which was exacted from the spoils in Num. xxxi. 25, &c. See Ps. lxxviii. 12 (LXX.): "For the beauty of the house to divide the spoils."

19. "Dedicated." In the Vulgate, "Judith offered for an anathema of oblivion;" "a gift or offering made to God, by way of an everlasting monument, to prevent the oblivion, or forgetting so great a benefit." The word "oblivion" may have been suggested by the name of Judith's husband, Manasses; or it may be a corrupt reading for "oblation." See Gen. xli. 51. Is. lxxv. 16, "The former troubles are forgotten."

JUDITH, XVI.

20 So the people continued feasting in Jerusalem before the sanctuary for the space of three months, and Judith remained with them.

21 After this time every one returned to his own inheritance, and Judith went to Bethulia, and remained in her own possession, and was in her time honourable in all the country.

22 And many desired her, but none knew her all the days of her life, after that Manasses her husband was dead, and was gathered to his people.

23 But she increased more and more in honour, and waxed old in her husband's house, being an hundred and five years old, and made her maid free; so she died in Bethulia: and they buried her in the ² cave of her husband Manasses.

² Or,
sepulchre.
^b Gen. 50. 10.

24 And the house of Israel lamented her ^b seven days: and before she died, she did distribute her goods to all them that were nearest of kindred to Manasses her husband, and to them that were the nearest of her kindred.

The remembrance of evil days is blotted out in the good ones that follow.

20. "Three months." In the Syriac, "one whole month," the duration of the festival in Esth. ix. 22. The feast of the dedication of the altar in 1 Macc. iv. 56, lasted eight days, the usual period of the solemn feasts.

21. "In her own possession." See viii. 7. She returned to her former life of prayer and retirement.

22. "Many desired her," &c. In the Vulgate, "Chastity was joined to her virtue," &c. See on xv. 10. She was not afraid of the reproach of the childless, for she left behind her the better memorial of the fruit of good labours (Wisd. iii. 14, 15; iv. 1, 2.). "On festival days she came forth with great glory" (*Addition in the Vulgate*).

23. "Her maid." In the Syriac, "her handmaidens." Some special gifts and rewards would be bestowed upon the handmaiden who had shared her peril in the Assyrian camp. On the manumission of the Hebrew servant, see Deut. xv. 12—14. From Prov. xvii. 2, it appears that servants were sometimes promoted to a share of the inheritance, though not in perpetuity (Ezek. xlvi. 16, 17.).

24. "She did distribute her goods." Such assignments of property before death are mentioned in the history of Jacob (Gen. xlviii. 22.); of Job (Job xlii. 15.); of Abraham (Gen. xxiv. 36; xxv. 5.); but whatever distribution was made, it was subject to the Law which forbade the alienation of land from the tribe to which it was originally assigned (Num. xxxvi.).

JUDITH, XVI.

25 And there was none that made the children of Israel any more afraid in the days of Judith, nor a long time after her death.

25. "In the days of Judith." This verse has occasioned much difficulty to commentators, as the seventy or eighty years which followed the captivity of Manasseh were far from being a time of peace or tranquillity to Israel. Dr. Prideaux says: "To this objection it is impossible to give a satisfactory answer. However, our not being able to clear this difficulty is not a sufficient reason for us to reject the whole history. That which seems most probable in this case is, that the writer of this book, the more to magnify his heroine, attributed too long a continuance to that peace which was by her obtained for the land. For, according to this account, it must have lasted at least eighty years, a period of tranquillity which they had never enjoyed from the time they were a nation."

The Vulgate adds: "But the day of the festivity of this victory is received by the Hebrews in the number of holy days, and is religiously observed by the Jews from that time until this day." The Book of Judith being probably of the age of the Maccabees, it is probable that the festival which is here connected with the victory over Holofernes was the Encænia or dedication, observed on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month Chisleu, which was instituted in those times. See 1 Macc. iv. 56, 59. 2 Macc. x. 5—7.

THE REST OF THE CHAPTERS
OF
THE BOOK OF ESTHER,

WHICH ARE FOUND NEITHER IN THE HEBREW, NOR IN THE CHALDEE.

INTRODUCTION.

As to the time when, or the person or persons by whom, these additions were first inserted into the Book of Esther, we have no means of ascertaining. The note of time with which the book ends in the Greek, would give the date of 177 B.C. (See *Note* on xi. 1.). These additions were known to Josephus, and are followed by him in his narrative, as part of the genuine history of Esther (*Antiq.* XI. 6.). We find them in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the LXX.; see *Introduction* to 1 Esdras); and Christian writers of note, such as St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom, taking the Bibles as they found them in general use, refer to them as if they were Scripture (See on xiv. 13, and also xiv. 2, 3.). Origen (185—254 A.D.), who first bestowed critical labour on the text of the Greek Versions of the Old Testament, gives the prayer of Mordecai, and the prayer of Esther, with passages in other books, as instances to show that the Bible then used contained in many places more than was found in the Hebrew. He defends, however, these additions on such grounds as these: That, as they were read in the copies circulated in the Churches, it would be ill done to bid the brethren reject their own sacred books, and pay court to the Jews, as if they alone possessed the pure and genuine copies; that to reject them would seem to imply that Providence, who had given in the Holy Scriptures means of edification to all the Churches in Christ, had hardly taken sufficient care of those for whom Christ died; that we were forbidden

"*The Rest of the Chapters,*" &c. These chapters, which are here placed apart by themselves, are, in the Greek Version (LXX.), from which they are taken, interspersed, in various portions, among the other chapters of the Book of Esther translated from the Hebrew, so as to make with them a continuous story. As these chapters stand here they are of course only fragments without any direct connection, till the intervening portions are supplied by referring to the Book of Esther. The first portion here printed (x. 4—xi. 1.) is the end of the Book of Esther in the Greek, which begins with xi. 2, "In the second year of the reign of 'Artaxerxes,' &c.; so that the end of the book is placed before the beginning, and the interpretation of the dream before the narration of the dream itself.

INTRODUCTION.

to remove the ancient landmarks which our fathers had set (See Origen's *Letter to Africanus*, on the History of Susanna, p. 14.). There is no need to show the insufficiency of these arguments; but we can judge how strong might be the general feeling against taking any steps towards carrying out a revision, which to many would appear to be like mutilating the Scriptures, by recollecting how such a passage as 1 John v. 7, which speaks of the Three Heavenly Witnesses, still retains its place in our English Bible, though it is not contained in the Greek.

St. Jerome (See *Introduction* to 1 Esdras), though feeling that he was likely to give offence, translates, as Esther, only that portion which was found in the Hebrew, declaring that it was evident that the integrity of the book had been injured by the additions of various translators. He not inaptly describes the character of these additions by comparing them to scholastic themes or exercises, composed to suit some given subject or specified occasion (See Jerome's *Preface to Esther*). St. Jerome places these apocryphal additions at the end of the book, after x. 3, with notes, pointing out that they were not in the Hebrew, though found in the ordinary translation. In the Latin Bibles of the Roman Church (the Vulgate), these portions of Esther are printed together by themselves at the end of the Canonical Esther, sometimes with the *Notes* of St. Jerome prefixed.

These additions are valuable for the evidence which they indirectly furnish of the historical character of the Book of Esther, as a true and contemporary narrative of the events which it relates. They suggest to us what kind of a book Esther might have been, had it been composed at a later period or in a distant land. It is evident from these additions that dissatisfaction was felt in early times by some of the Jews against the Book of Esther in its genuine form. The religious element did not seem sufficiently prominent; the character of Esther, as a maiden of Israel eager to become a concubine of the uncircumcised king, seemed to require some vindication, and her conduct to demand some protest. And the translator, or others after him, probably Egyptian Jews, endeavoured to supply these defects, as they seemed, and to render the story less liable to objection, more edifying, and more honourable to the Jewish character, as represented by the two chief personages, Mardocheus and Esther (See, for instance, xiii. 8—xiv. 19.). Thus, long prayers are composed, and explanations of supposed difficulties are inserted into them (xiii. 13, 14; xiv. 16—18.).

ESTHER, X.

Part of the Tenth Chapter after the Greek.

5 *Mardocheus remembereth and expoundeth his dream of the river and the two dragons.*

THEN Mardocheus said, God hath done these things.

5 For I remember ^a a dream which I saw concerning these matters, and nothing thereof hath failed. ^a See ch. 11. 2, &c.

6 A little fountain became a river, and there was light, and the sun, and much water: this river is Esther, whom the king married, and made queen:

7 and the two dragons are I and Aman.

8 And the nations were those that were assembled to destroy the name of the Jews:

9 and my nation is this Israel, which cried to God, and were saved: for the Lord hath saved his people, and the Lord hath delivered us from all those evils, and God hath wrought signs and great wonders, which have not been done among the Gentiles.

x. The Interpretation of the Dream of Mardocheus.

5. "I remember a dream." The dream is related, xi. 4—12. As the whole Book of Esther intervenes, in the Greek, between the dream and its interpretation, subsequent events are represented as interpreting (compare xi. 12.) for Mardocheus the prophetic dream, which the writer had prefixed to the Book of Esther, as in his opinion a more fitting introduction than the simple narrative as found in the Hebrew.

6. The Latin gives the verse thus: "The little fountain which grew into a river, and was changed into light and the sun, and overflowed forth abundantly into many waters, is Esther."

"Light." Esth. viii. 16.

8. "To destroy the name." Compare Deut. vii. 24; ix. 14; xii. 3; xxix. 20. Ps. ix. 5; cix. 13. 2 Esdr. ii. 7.

9. "Which cried to God, and were saved." Compare Ps. l. 15; cvii. 6, 19, 28. 2 Macc. xiv. 15.

"God hath wrought signs and great wonders." Compare Rom. xv. 19, "mighty signs and wonders." The writer applies to the remarkable deliverance of his people from the peril of a great destruction, words which are applicable to occurrences which strike men as more obviously "miraculous:" he does not distinguish between the "miraculous" and the "providential."

ESTHER, X.

10 Therefore hath he made two lots, one for the people of God, and another for all the Gentiles.

11 And these two lots came at the hour, and time, and day of judgment, before God among all nations.

12 So God remembered his people, and justified his inheritance.

13 Therefore those days shall be unto them in the month Adar, the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the same month, with an assembly, and joy, and with gladness before God, according to the generations for ever among his people.

CHAPTER XI.

2 The stock and quality of Mardocheus. 6 He dreameth of two dragons coming forth to fight, 10 and of a little fountain, which became a great water.

10. Mardocheus is here made to speak with allusion to Esth. iii. 7; and the writer sees in the casting of lots for the selection of a lucky day for the cutting off of the Jews, the working of a hidden providence, and the decision of a higher issue,—the fate of God's people, and the fate of the heathen. This was no doubt true in a general way (compare Prov. xvi. 33; and the *Note* on Esth. iii. 7.), but there is a needless exaggeration in the expressions, which seem to imply that there was an united gathering of the Gentiles against Israel. See on xiv. 8, 9. When it is said, "Therefore hath God made two lots," "lot" is used in its sense of appointed state or condition, like "fate," "destiny" (see, for instance, Wisd. ii. 9; v. 5.).

12. "So God remembered his people, and justified his inheritance." "Remembered;" compare, for instance, Ps. xcvi. 3; cv. 42. Is. lxiii. 11. "His people;" 4 Esdr. v. 27; vi. 58. Neh. i. 10. "His people and His inheritance;" xiii. 15. Deut. iv. 20; ix. 29. Ps. xxviii. 9; xciv. 5, 14; cvi. 4, 5, 40. Joel ii. 17. Ecclus. xxiv. 12. "an honourable people, even the portion of the Lord's inheritance." "His inheritance;" xiv. 5. Judith xiii. 5. 4 Esdr. viii. 15, 16. Is. lxiii. 17.

"Justified his inheritance." Defended His people, because He knew they were in the right, and openly vindicated their cause. For this use of "justify," compare, for instance, Deut. xxv. 1. 1 Kin. viii. 32. 4 Esdr. iv. 18. Ecclus. xiii. 22. Sometimes our translators substitute another word for "justify," in order to give, as they think, the meaning of the original more clearly. For instance, 2 Sam. xv. 4, "I would do him justice;" or, Ps. lxxxii. 3, "justify the poor and needy" ("See that such as are in need and necessity have right," Prayer-Book version). Compare with ver. 12 here, Ecclus. xxxv. 18, 19, "The Lord will not be slack . . . till He have judged the cause of His people, and made them to rejoice in His mercy."

ESTHER, XI.

IN the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemeus and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said he was a priest and Levite, and Ptolemeus his son, brought this epistle of Phurim, which they said was the same, and that Lysimachus the son of Ptolemeus, that was in Jerusalem, had interpreted it.

2 In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes

CHAPTER XI.

1. This is a note appended at the end of the Greek Version. The fourth year of the joint reign of Ptolemy Philometor (as yet a child), King of Egypt, and his mother Cleopatra, would be about 177 B.C. Ptolemy Philometor died about 145 B.C. (1 Macc. xi. 18.). Some of the events of his reign are narrated, 1 Macc. x. 51—58; xi. 1—18. See also Dan. xi. 25—30.

This note seems intended to intimate that in the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, the Book of Esther in Greek was brought to Egypt by Dositheus and Ptolemæus, who declared that it was the same as the original Hebrew, and had been translated at Jerusalem by Lysimachus. The Greek translations of the Old Testament were themselves made in Egypt, and the note looks as if the Egyptian writer or compiler of the additions to the Book of Esther wished to claim for them the sanction of some higher authority.

“A priest and Levite.” If Dositheus were a priest he must needs have been a Levite; but the writer may have added this for the sake of readers who might not be sufficiently familiar with Jewish matters to recollect at once that all priests, as sons of Aaron, were of the tribe of Levi.

“This epistle of Phurim.” The writer would seem to mean by this the whole book, containing not only the decree for keeping the Feast of Purim, but the narrative which would explain the reasons for keeping it. Compare Esth. ix. 20.

2—12. The Dream of Mardocheus.

The Book of Esther in the Greek begins here, and xi. and xii. are prefixed, as the opening portion of the story, to the first chapter of the Canonical Esther.

2, 3. “In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes . . . Mardocheus . . . being a servitor in the king’s court.” This does not agree with the narrative in Esther, where we find that it was not until after the advancement of Esther, in the *seventh* year of the king, that Mordecai was appointed to hold any office in the court (Esth. ii. 16. Compare ii. 11 and 19.).

“Artaxerxes.” Josephus also (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 1.) takes the king to be Artaxerxes the son of Xerxes; but the Ahasuerus of Esther is rather to be identified with Xerxes himself (see Esth. i. 1.). It is not likely that Artaxerxes Longimanus would act as a persecutor of the Jews, or speak

ESTHER, XI.

the great, in the first day of the month Nisan, Mardocheus the son of Jairus, the son of Semei, the son of Cisai, of the tribe of Benjamin, had a dream;

3 who was a Jew, and dwelt in the city of Susa, a great man, being a servitor in the king's court.

4 He was also one of the captives, which Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon carried from Jerusalem with Jechonias king of Judea; and this was his dream:

5 Behold a noise of a tumult, with thunder, and earthquakes, and uproar in the land:

of them as "a malicious people, having laws contrary to all nations" (Esth. xiii. 4. Compare Esth. iii. 8.), for we find from Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra vii.; Neh. ii. 4—8.) that all through his reign Artaxerxes showed great favour to the Jewish people. In his seventh year he had sent Ezra to Jerusalem with rich gifts for "the house of the God of heaven" (vii. 23.), and with a commission granting to him extensive power and jurisdiction. The learned Dean Prideaux, indeed (*Connection*, i. 5.), who follows this writer and Josephus in supposing that the Ahasuerus of Esther is Artaxerxes, thinks it likely that the full and ample commission granted to Ezra was obtained by the influence of Esther, now advanced to be chief of the concubines. Prideaux, however, seems to have forgotten that if Ahasuerus be Artaxerxes, Ezra had not only left Babylon but had arrived at Jerusalem some months before Esther had been seen by the king. For Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra vii. 8.), and Esther was not taken into the king's house till the tenth month of the seventh year of Ahasuerus (Esth. ii. 16.).

"The great" (king). Compare xiii. 1; xvi. 1. The ordinary title of the Persian king.

"The month Nisan." Esth. iii. 7. See on Neh. ii. 1.

3. "A great man, being a servitor in the king's court." The narrative is not quite consistent with itself, for here it is said that Mardocheus was employed in the king's court (this may also be inferred from xii. 1. 2); but in xii. 5 it is related that, at a later period, in reward for discovering the conspiracy of the two eunuchs, Mardocheus was commanded to serve in the court.

4. "He was also one of the captives." The writer goes astray in his chronology. Jehoiachin, or Jeconias, was carried away captive (2 Kin. xxiv. 12, 15.), B.C. 599, and the second year of Artaxerxes (465—423 B.C.) would be more than a hundred and thirty years after this. The writer apparently has misunderstood Esth. ii. 6, where it is stated that Mordecai's ancestor, Kish, had been carried away in the time of Jeconiah.

"This was his dream." The interpretation is given at the end of the book (x. 5—9.).

ESTHER, XI.

6 and, behold, two great dragons came forth ready to fight, and their cry was great.

7 And at their cry all nations were prepared to battle, that they might fight against the righteous people.

8 And lo a day of darkness and obscurity, tribulation and anguish, affliction and great uproar, upon earth.

9 And the whole righteous nation was troubled, fearing their own evils, and were ready to perish.

10 Then they cried unto God, and upon their cry, as it were from a little fountain, was made a great flood, even much water.

11 The light and the sun rose up, and the lowly were exalted, and devoured the glorious.

12 Now when Mardocheus, who had seen this dream, and what God had determined to do, was awake, he bare this dream in mind, and until night by all means was desirous to know it.

CHAPTER XII.

2 *The conspiracy of the two eunuchs is discovered by Mardocheus, 5 for which he is entertained by the king, and rewarded.*

6. "Two great dragons;" x. 7. "Dragons;" that is, serpents: dragon is used to denote a serpent in the Greek translation (LXX.) of the Old Testament, in Exod. vii. 9, 10, 12. Deut. xxxii. 33. Ps. xci. 13.

7, 9. "Righteous people . . . righteous nation." See such places as Exod. xix. 6. Lev. xx. 26. Deut. vii. 6; xxvi. 19. Is. xxvi. 2; lx. 21. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 9.

8. "A day of darkness." Compare Joel ii. 2. Zeph. i. 15.

"Tribulation and anguish." St. Paul (Rom. ii. 9.) uses the same words.

11. "The light." Compare Esth. viii. 16; x. 6. Ps. xcvi. 11.

"The lowly were exalted." Compare St. Luke i. 52. Ezek. xvii. 24; xxi. 26.

12. Josephus makes no mention of this dream of Mardocheus, or of its interpretation.

CHAPTER XII.

The First Conspiracy Discovered by Mardocheus.

In several particulars this first conspiracy differs from that related subsequently, when the narrative in the Book of Esther is, with some variations, followed. For instance, this first conspiracy is made to take place in the second year of "Artaxerxes;" the later one in his seventh year (Esth. ii. 16, 21.). Mardocheus himself tells the king of this conspiracy; but in the later one the information is given to Esther, and she makes the king aware of the plot. Here it is said that the eunuchs

AND Mardocheus took his rest in the court with Gabatha and Tharra, the two eunuchs of the king, and keepers of the palace.

^a Esth. 2. 21.
& 6. 2.

2 ^a And he heard their devices, and searched out their purposes, and learned that they were about to lay hands upon Artaxerxes the king; and so he certified the king of them.

3 Then the king examined the two eunuchs, and after that they had confessed it, they were strangled.

4 And the king made a record of these things, and Mardocheus also wrote thereof.

5 So the king commanded Mardocheus to serve in the court, and for this he rewarded him.

confess their crime; but no mention is made of any confession of the later conspiracy. In return for the part which Mardocheus takes in disclosing this first plot, he receives rewards; but when the second plot is formed and discovered, it is expressly noted (Esth. vi. 3.) that nothing was done to recompense Mordecai for saving the king's life. No motive is assigned for the crime in this first conspiracy; but in the later one (in the Greek, but not in the Hebrew of Esth. ii. 21.) it is added that it was jealousy at the advancement of Mardocheus which led the two eunuchs, the chief of the guard of the king's person, to seek to kill the king. Josephus, who omits all mention of this first conspiracy, says (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 4.), when he comes to relate the conspiracy which took place after the advancement of Esther, that Barnabazus, a servant of one of the eunuchs, being a Jew, disclosed the plot to Mordecai.

1. "Took his rest in the court." See on xi. 3; and below, on ver. 5. "Gabatha and Tharra." These names represent Bigthan (or Bigthana, Esth. vi. 2.) and Teresh, the names as given in Esth. ii. 21. When the narrative of the later conspiracy (Esth. ii. 21—23.) is given in the Greek, these names are omitted; in Josephus they appear as Bagathous and Theodestes.

3. "They were strangled." The Greek copies, followed here by the Latin, merely say, "they were led away," that is, to death, without specifying the kind of death by which they died. It only needs the insertion of a single letter to give the reading which the English translation has adopted. The conspirators in Esth. ii. 23 were hanged, or crucified (*Josephus*, XI. vi. 4.).

4. "The king made a record of these things." See on Esth. ii. 23; vi. 2.

5. "The king commanded Mardocheus to serve in the court." This seems to be inconsistent with ver. 1, and xi. 3., which state that Mardocheus was already serving in the court of the king. At the time of the later conspiracy Mordecai was one of those who "sat in the king's gate," as judge, or the holder of some other important office; and in the Greek of Esth. ii. 21, it is stated that vexation at the advancement of Mardocheus led the two eunuchs to seek the life of the king.

ESTHER, XIII.

6 Howbeit Aman the son of Amadathus the Agagite, who was in great honour with the king, sought to molest Mardocheus and his people because of the two eunuchs of the king.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *The copy of the king's letters to destroy the Jews.* 8 *The prayer of Mardocheus for them.*

THE copy of the letters was this: The great king Artaxerxes writeth these things to the princes and governors that are under him from India unto Ethiopia, in an hundred and seven and twenty provinces.

Joseph.
Antiq. lib.
II. cap. 6.

6. "Aman . . . sought to molest Mardocheus and his people because of the two eunuchs of the king." This looks as if the writer intended to imply that Aman had been secretly in league with the eunuchs. Aman is in no hurry to carry out his intended vengeance, as he allows an interval of some ten years to pass by (from the second to the twelfth year of "Artaxerxes," iii. 7; xi. 2.), before making any attempt "to molest Mardocheus and his people."

"The Agagite." The translators of the English Version here give "Agagite," from Esth. iii. 1 (compare *Josephus* XI. vi. 5, 12.), as a conjectural emendation; but the Greek here and in Esth. iii. 1 reads "Bugaëus," a word which occurs in the *Iliad* of Homer (xiii. 824.) in the sense of "vain boaster." The writer probably intended some such meaning here, using the word as an epithet, and not as a proper name. In xvi. 10, Aman is called a Macedonian.

"Because of the two eunuchs of the king." This is inconsistent with the subsequent statement (iii. 5, 6.), that Haman's anger against Mordecai was caused by the refusal of Mordecai to do him reverence. See also xvi. 12—14.

The writer or compiler of these additional chapters, who so unskillfully prefixed to the Book of Esther this account of the conspiracy, does not seem to have troubled himself to consider the inconveniences resulting from the circumstance that soon afterwards (ii. 21—23.), the course of the narrative, following the authentic history of Esther, brings forward another conspiracy in some respects very similar to this. It might have been supposed that readers would naturally expect to find some allusion or reference to the former conspiracy, and would think it strange that neither the king nor Mordecai remembered a matter which concerned them both so nearly. Josephus, though adopting many of these apocryphal embellishments of the story of Esther, is in this respect more judicious, and omits altogether the story of the first conspiracy.

CHAPTER XIII.

1—7. The Letter of Artaxerxes, ordering the Destruction of the Jews.

This letter is, in the Greek, inserted after Esth. iii. 13. It is also given, with the phraseology somewhat varied, by Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 6.).

ESTHER, XIII.

2 After that I became lord over many nations, and had dominion over the whole world, not lifted up with presumption of my authority, but carrying myself alway with equity and mildness, I purposed to settle my subjects continually in a quiet life, and making my kingdom ²peaceable, and open for passage to the utmost coasts, to renew peace, which is desired of all men.

² Or, *mild*.

3 Now when I asked my counsellors how this might be brought to pass, Aman, that excelled in wisdom among us, and was approved for his constant good will and stedfast fidelity, and had the honour of the second place in the kingdom,

4 declared unto us, that in all nations throughout the world there was scattered a certain malicious people, that had laws contrary to all nations, and continually despised the commandments of kings, so as the uniting of our kingdoms, honourably intended by us, cannot ³go forward.

³ Or, *be settled*.

5 Seeing then we understand that this people alone is continually in opposition unto all men, differing in the strange manner of their laws, and

It will be borne in mind that, before coming to this "letter of Artaxerxes," the events related in a considerable portion of Esther are supposed to intervene. After the end of "chap. xii.," there commences in the Greek Version (LXX.), with the connecting phrase "after these words," or "these events," the translation of the Book of Esther, which is followed from i. 1 to iii. 13. Then comes this letter of Artaxerxes; after which the translation of Esther goes on again from iii. 14 to the end of chap. iv.

1. "The great king;" xvi. 1; xi. 2.

"From India unto Æthiopia, in a hundred and seven and twenty provinces;" xvi. 1. See Esth. i. 1.

2. "Quiet." The writer of the letter is fond of rather grand words; here, for instance, the word used implies, quiet like a calm sea or sheltered harbour, undisturbed by the storm-driven waves of calamity.

"Peaceable," &c. See xvi. 8; and compare with this verse the compliment paid by the orator Tertullus to Felix, "Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness," Acts xxiv. 2. Compare 1 Tim. ii. 2.

"Open for passage." Insecurity of roads, and the prevalence of brigandage, have been in all ages signs of anarchy, bad government, or a low degree of civilization among a people. Comp. Judg. v. 6. 2 Chron. xv. 5.

3. "The second place in the kingdom;" ver. 6. Compare Judith ii. 4. Gen. xli. 40. 1 Sam. xxiii. 17.

4—6. The king does not condescend to name the people who are to be destroyed.

4. "Contrary to all nations." See on Esth. iii. 8.

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evil affected to our state, working all the mischief they can, that our kingdom may not be firmly established :

6 Therefore have we commanded, that all they that are signified in writing unto you by Aman, who is ordained over the affairs, and is ²next unto ^{2 Or, second from us.} us, shall all, with their wives and children, be utterly destroyed by the sword of their enemies, without all mercy and pity, the fourteenth day of the twelfth month Adar of this present year :

7 that they, who of old and now also are malicious, may in one day with violence go into the grave, and so ever hereafter cause our affairs to be well settled, and without trouble.

8 ¶ Then Mardocheus thought upon all the works of the Lord, and made his prayer unto him,

9 saying, O Lord, Lord, the King Almighty : for

6. "Next unto us." Compare ver. 3. The words in the Greek, which are also those used by Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 6.), are, "our second father." "Our father." See xvi. 11, and *Note*.

"Be utterly destroyed . . . the fourteenth day of the twelfth month "Adar." The writer of the letter has made a mistake, and seems to have supposed that the first day of the festival (*Esth.* ix. 21 ; x. 13.) was also the day appointed for the massacre. In the second letter (*xvi.* 20.), the writer has been more careful, and has "the thirteenth day." When this letter was inserted into the Greek translation of *Esth.* iii. 13, the compiler omitted the day of the month in *Esth.* iii. 13, in order apparently to avoid the too obvious contradiction ; but in *viii.* 12 ; *ix.* 1, the Greek translation, following the Hebrew, gives correctly "the thirteenth day."

8. After this copy of the letter, which is inserted after *Esth.* iii. 13, the Greek translation follows the narrative in Esther to the end of chap. iv. ; and then inserts a long additional passage, which extends from *xiii.* 8 to the end of xv., containing the prayer of Mardocheus, the prayer of Esther, and the interview of Esther with the king.

8—18. The Prayer of Mardocheus.

It seemed to the readers of Esther to be unfitting that, in circumstances of so great peril, there should be no record of prayers and supplications to God. Carrying out therefore the intimation supplied by the words of Esther (*iv.* 16.), "go . . . and fast ye for me," some Greek-speaking Jew composed such a prayer as he thought suitable to the occasion.

As, moreover, the conduct of Mordecai might be thought rude and uncourteous in refusing to pay respect to Haman as the king's minister, it seemed expedient to supply at the same time some explanation of his motives. Compare also Josephus, *Antiq.* XI. vi. 8.

9. "O Lord, Lord, the King Almighty." See ver. 15.

ESTHER, XIII.

the whole world is in thy power, and if thou hast appointed to save Israel, there is no man that can gainsay thee :

10 for thou hast made heaven and earth, and all the wondrous things under the heaven.

11 Thou art Lord of all things, and there is no man that can resist thee, which art the Lord.

12 Thou knowest all things, and thou knowest, Lord, that it was neither in contempt nor pride, nor for any desire of glory, that I did not bow down to proud Aman.

13 For I could have been content with good will for the salvation of Israel to kiss the soles of his feet.

14 But I did this, that I might not prefer the glory of man above the glory of God : neither will I worship any but thee, O God, neither will I do it in pride.

10. "Thou hast made heaven and earth." Compare Neh. ix. 6. Jer. xxxii. 17. Is. xxxvii. 16 (2 Kin. xix. 15); xlii. 5; xlv. 24; xlv. 12, 18; xlviii. 13. Zech. xii. 1.

"Under the heaven." Compare Exod. xvii. 14. Deut. xxv. 19; xxix. 20. Job xli. 11. St. Luke xvii. 24.

12. "Thou knowest all things." So also the prayer of Esther (xiv. 15.). Compare Ps. cxxxix. Dan. ii. 22.

"Bow down." The word is the same as that which in ver. 14, and often in the Gospels (for instance, St. Matt. viii. 2; ix. 18; xiv. 33; xv. 25, &c.), is translated "worship." According to the account in the historical Esther, Mordecai refused to pay to Haman any of the outward signs of respect (iii. 25; v. 9.); and the attempt at an explanation here given, that Mardocheus only refused to pay him those tokens of reverence which were due to God, seems to have reference to the customs of the Greeks rather than of the Orientals. For prostration to the ground was a mark of reverence paid not only to the Jewish kings (2 Sam. i. 2; xiv. 4; xviii. 28. 1 Chron. xxix. 20. 1 Kin. i. 31.), but to other persons whose favour it was desired to gain, or to whom as guests or prophets it was thought becoming to pay due respect (1 Sam. xx. 41; xxv. 23, 24. Judith x. 23. St. Matt. xviii. 26, 29. Gen. xviii. 2; xix. 1. 2 Kin. iv. 37. St. Mark v. 22; vii. 25. Acts x. 25.). So that, as far as outward bodily tokens went, there was apparently no marked distinction between such "worship" and that which was paid to God (Gen. xvii. 3. Neh. viii. 6. See also on Esth. iii. 2; v. 9.).

13. "To kiss the soles of his feet." Compare Is. xlix. 23; lx. 14. St. Luke vii. 38.

14. "Neither will I do it" (Greek, "these things") "in pride." That is, refuse to give reverence to Aman. Mardocheus professes, that as hitherto he has not acted from contempt or personal feelings in refusing to pay tokens of respect to Aman, so in refusing them for the future, he will not be acting from pride.

ESTHER, XIV.

15 And now, O Lord God and King, spare thy people: for their eyes are upon us to bring us to nought; yea, they desire to destroy the inheritance, that hath been thine from the beginning.

16 Despise not the portion, which thou hast delivered out of Egypt for thine own self.

17 Hear my prayer, and be merciful unto thine inheritance: turn our sorrow into joy, that we may live, O Lord, and praise thy name: and ²destroy ²Or, shut, or, stop not.

18 All Israel in like manner cried most ³earnestly ³Gr. mightily.

CHAPTER XIV.

The prayer of queen Esther for herself and her people.

QUEEN Esther also, being in fear of death, resorted unto the Lord:

15. "O Lord God and King." See ver. 9. "King;" compare Ps. v. 2, "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God;" lxxiv. 12; lxxxiv. 3; lxxxix. 18; cxlv. 1. "The Lord is our King, He will save us," Is. xxxiii. 22. Jer. x. 10; "The King, whose name is the Lord of hosts," xlvi. 18; xlviii. 15; li. 57. After "King," the Greek and Latin copies have, "O God of Abraham," which words have, without any apparent reason, been omitted in the English translation. "God of Abraham;" Gen. xxxi. 42. Ps. xlvii. 9. Compare Gen. xxvi. 24; xxviii. 13.

"Spare thy people;" Joel ii. 17. 4 Esdr. viii. 45.

15—17. "Thy people . . . thine inheritance." See x. 12.

16. Compare Exod. xxxii. 11. Deut. ix. 29. 1 Kin. viii. 51, 53. 1 Chr. xvii. 21.

17. "Hear my prayer;" Dan. ix. 17. Judith ix. 12.

"That we may live . . . and praise thy name." "O let us live, and we shall call upon thy name" (Ps. lxxx. 18. Compare cxviii. 17; cxix. 175). "Death can not celebrate thee . . . The living, the living, he shall praise thee" (Is. xxxviii. 18, 19. Compare Ps. vi. 5; lxxxviii. 10—12; cxv. 17, 18.). Bar. ii. 17, 18, "the dead that are in the graves . . . will give unto the Lord neither praise nor righteousness . . . but the soul that is greatly vexed . . . will give thee praise and righteousness, O Lord." Compare Ecclus. xvii. 27, 28.

"Destroy not the mouths of them that praise thee, O Lord." Compare Esther's prayer, xiv. 9.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Prayer of Esther.

1. The prayer of Esther seems to have been composed with the same object as the prayer of Mardocheus: to give more prominence to the religious and devotional sentiment, which seemed to the writer

ESTHER, XIV.

2 and laid away her glorious apparel, and put on the garments of anguish and mourning: and instead of precious ointments, she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she humbled her body greatly, and all the places of her joy she filled with her torn hair.

3 And she prayed unto the Lord God of Israel, saying, O my Lord, thou only art our King: help

insufficiently expressed by the brief words of Esther (iv. 16.), "I also and my maidens will fast likewise;" and to endeavour to vindicate the character of Esther, who, though a daughter of Israel, had been willing to become the concubine of a heathen prince, or even, as it might be thought from the narrative in the Canonical book, had sought for and eagerly accepted such a position.

2. Nothing is said in the historical Esther of these marks of extreme humiliation, except so far as any of them may be supposed to be implied in Esther's promise that she and her maids would "fast."

"She covered her head with ashes and dung." The writer is not content with saying that Esther put ashes or dust upon her head, which was one of the usual signs of mourning (see Esth. iv. 1; and compare Josh. vii. 6. 1 Sam. iv. 12. 2 Sam. i. 2; xiii. 19; xv. 32. Neh. ix. 1. Job ii. 12. Ezek. xxvii. 30. Lam. ii. 10. Rev. xviii. 19.); but thinks it more impressive to add that she covered her head with dung also.

2, 3. "She humbled her body greatly . . . And she prayed unto the Lord, saying," &c. Clement of Rome, an early Christian writer of the first century after Christ, whom many have supposed to be the Clement spoken of in Phil. iv. 3, seems to refer to this place when, having cited the example of "the blessed Judith," he goes on to say, "with not less courage did Esther also, perfect in faith, expose herself to danger that she might deliver the twelve tribes" (the same word, in Acts xxvi. 7.) "of Israel, which were on the point of being destroyed. "For by her fasting and her humiliation she besought the All-seeing "Lord, the God of ages; who, beholding the lowliness of her soul, delivered the people for whose sake she ventured into danger" (see Clement's *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, chap. lv.). The Book of Esther follows Judith in the Greek; and when, besides this, we consider how slight and indirect is the intimation given in the Canonical Esther, concerning any devotions and supplications made by Esther, it seems far more probable that Clement, in speaking of the humiliation and prayers of Esther, was thinking of what he read, set out at full length in his Greek copy of the Old Testament, rather than of any inferences he may himself have drawn from the few words in Esth. iv. 16.

2. "And all the places of her joy she filled with her torn hair." Plucking off the hair was a sign of mourning (Ezra ix. 3. 2 Esdr. i. 8.); but the writer expresses this here in a foolish and exaggerated way.

Such excessive demonstrations of grief were not the best way of preparing herself for appearing on the third day (xv. 1.), in her full beauty and attractiveness, before the king.

ESTHER, XIV.

me, desolate woman, which have no helper but thee :

4 ^a for my danger is in mine hand.

^a 1 Sam. 28.
21.
Job 13. 14.
Ps. 119. 109.

5 From my youth up I have heard in the tribe of my family, that thou, O Lord, tookest Israel from among all people, and our fathers from all their predecessors, for a perpetual inheritance, and thou hast performed whatsoever thou didst promise them.

6 And now we have sinned before thee : therefore hast thou given us into the hands of our enemies,

7 because we worshipped their gods : O Lord, thou art righteous.

8 Nevertheless it satisfieth them not, that we are in bitter captivity : but they have stricken hands with their idols,

3. "Help me, desolate woman, which have no helper but thee;" ver. 14. See also ver. 19; and compare Ps. xxii. 11; lx. 11 (cviii. 12.).

4. "My danger is in mine hand." "Is in mine hand" seems to mean, as in Job xv. 23, and elsewhere, "is imminent," "is close at hand." To put one's life in one's hand is, however, a frequent expression (Judg. xii. 3. 1 Sam. xix. 5; xxviii. 21. Job xiii. 14. Ps cxix. 109.) for running great risk of death, especially when such peril was voluntarily incurred; and it may be that Esther's words were intended to have some such meaning here.

5. "Thou tookest Israel from among all people." Compare 4 Esdr. v. 23—27. Deut. iv. 34; vii. 6. 1 Kin. viii. 53. See also x. 12; xiii. 15—17; xvi. 21. Ps. cxxxv. 4, "The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto "himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure."

"And our fathers." See Josh. xxiv. 2, 3.

"For a perpetual inheritance." Compare Gen. xvii. 7, 8, "for an everlasting covenant," "for an everlasting possession."

"Thou hast performed whatsoever thou didst promise them." Compare Neh. ix. 8. Josh. xxi. 45; xxiii. 14.

6. Compare Judith xi. 10.

8. "They have stricken hands with their idols." Literally, "they "have laid their hands upon the hands of their idols," in token of a solemn covenant with their idols that they would be their devoted servants (compare Ezek. xvii. 18.), to destroy their enemies, the worshippers of Jehovah. For other instances of this custom of giving the hand in token of covenant, and of fealty, see Ezra x. 19. 1 Chr. xxix. 24 (*Margin*). 2 Chr. xxx. 8 (*Margin*).

8—11. The writer is carried away by his eloquence, so as rather to lose sight of the actual circumstances of the case. There was no general religious league of the heathen against the Jews; but the malice and craft of one man, Aman, had prevailed with the king, whom this book represents as very far from being an idolater (xvi. 16, 18, 21.),

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9 that they will abolish the thing that thou with thy mouth hast ordained, and destroy thine inheritance, and stop the mouth of them that praise thee, and quench the glory of thy house, and of thine altar,

² Gr. *vain things*. 10 and open the mouths of the heathen to set forth the praises of the ²idols, and to magnify a fleshly king for ever.

³ Gr. *be not*. 11 O Lord, give not thy sceptre unto them that ³be nothing, and let them not laugh at our fall; but turn their device upon themselves, and make him an example, that hath begun this against us.

⁴ Or, *gods*. 12 Remember, O Lord, make thyself known in time of our affliction, and give me boldness, O King of the ⁴nations, and Lord of all power.

to give orders for their destruction. And, as for the motives of Aman himself, there is nothing related to show that he was actuated by any special zeal on behalf of idolatry. When the writer follows Esther, he says that the pride and anger of Aman were aroused by the refusal of Mardocheus to pay him the respect which he considered his due (iii. 5; vi. 13.). The writer is, however, inconsistent with himself, as in an earlier part of the story he had assigned another motive, the vexation of Aman at the death of the two eunuchs who had conspired against the king (xii. 6.). See also xvi. 10, 14, where an entirely different account is given of the whole matter.

9. "Stop the mouth of them that praise thee." Compare the prayer of Mardocheus, xiii. 17.

"Quench the glory of thy house, and of thine altar." The Book of Esther makes no allusion to the Temple, or its worship, or the Holy City; though the Jews at Jerusalem may be thought to be included among "the other Jews that were in the king's provinces" (ix. 16.): the Temple had been long ago rebuilt by the permission of Cyrus and Darius. Compare the prayer of Judith, ix. 13, "who have purposed cruel things against thy covenant, and thy hallowed house," &c.

10. "To set forth the praises of the idols." Compare Dan. v. 4.

11. "Them that be nothing." Though this might be understood to mean the idols (compare 1 Cor. viii. 4. Is. xli. 24.), yet the words which follow, "let them not laugh at our fall," seem rather to show that the heathen are meant. Compare 4 Esdr. vi. 56, 57, "These heathen, which have ever been reputed as nothing."

"Make him an example, that hath begun this against us;" that is, Aman. Compare Ps. xxxv. 8; cxli. 10.

12. "Remember, O Lord." Compare Ps. cvi. 4.

"Make thyself known." Compare Is. lii. 10. Ps. xcvi. 2, 3.

"O King of the nations;" Jer. x. 7. St. John also uses this title in Rev. xv. 3, according to the best manuscripts. The reading, however, "King of the nations," is given here by a conjecture of the trans-

ESTHER, XIV.

13 Give me eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion: turn his heart to hate him that fighteth against us, that there may be an end of him, and of all that are likeminded to him:

14 but deliver us with thine hand, and help me that am desolate, and which have no other help but thee.

15 Thou knowest all things, O Lord; thou knowest that I hate the glory of the unrighteous, and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised, and of ²all ²Gr. every stranger. the heathen.

lators, who appear to have thought that the reading of the Greek copies (so also the Latin, and the *Margin* here), "King of the gods," was in some way objectionable; possibly as seeming to contain some allusion to the mythological notions of the heathen. Yet see 1 Cor. viii. 5. Ps. xcv. 3, "a great King above all gods."

13. St. Augustine (354—430 A.D.), who received these additions as integral portions of Esther, and as "Divine Scripture," quotes xiv. 13, and xv. 7; and brings forward Esther's prayer and its answer, with other illustrations from Holy Scripture, to show how God changes the hearts and purposes of men by working on their wills. St. Chrysostom also (354—407 A.D.), when urging the duty of prayer in the time of trouble, cites part of xiv. 13, and adduces the example of Esther, who, clothed in sackcloth and ashes (ver. 2.), prayed for help to the All-merciful God, and was granted a favourable issue to her prayer. The citations of St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom show that the copies in use in their time must have varied somewhat from those which we have now, as some of the passages they cite are not found in our present copies. See St. Augustine's *Treatise Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians*, I. xx., A.D. written 420; and St. Chrysostom's *Third Sermon on the Statues*, preached at Antioch, A.D. 387, during the panic which arose after the people had destroyed the statues of the Emperor Theodosius and his family.

"Before the lion." Compare 2 Tim. iv. 17. Ps. xxii. 21. Prov. xix. 12; xx. 2. Josephus (*Antiq.* XVIII. vi. 10.) relates, that on the death of the tyrant Tiberius, Marsyas, the freedman of Agrippa (the Herod of Acts xii.), whom Tiberius had put in chains, ran in to tell the good news, saying, "The lion is dead!"

14. Repeated from ver. 3.

15. "Thou knowest all things." Compare the prayer of Mardocheus, xiv. 12.

15—18. Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 8.) omits this apologetic portion of the prayer, and makes Esther merely pray that God would make her words persuasive, and render her presence more beautiful than it was before, that both by her words and beauty she might succeed; and that He would excite a hatred in the king against the enemies of the Jews (ver. 13.). These scruples of conscience find no place or expression in the historical Book of Esther. The Jews of the Captivity seem to have become in many ways somewhat lax in the

ESTHER, XIV.

16 Thou knowest my necessity: for I abhor the
² Gr. *pride*. sign of my ²high estate, which is upon mine head
 in the days wherein I shew myself, and that I
 abhor it as a menstruous rag, and that I wear it
³ Gr. *quiet*,
 or, *private*. not when I am ³private by myself,

17 and that thine handmaid hath not eaten at
 Aman's table, and that I have not greatly esteemed
 the king's feast, nor drunk the wine of the drink
 offerings.

18 Neither had thine handmaid any joy since

observance of the Law of their fathers (compare on Esth. ii. 7. Tobit i. 10.).

16. "The sign of my high estate, which is upon mine head." The "royal crown;" Esth. ii. 17. Vashti had been commanded to wear it, when she was summoned to the feast (i. 11.).

"Menstruous rag." Is. xxx. 22.

17. "Thine handmaid hath not eaten at Aman's table." In illustration of the strong feelings of repugnance felt by the stricter Jews against eating "the bread of the Gentiles," compare Tobit i. 10—12. Judith xii. 2. Dan. i. 8. Acts xi. 3.

"Aman's table." It is not easy to say what the writer meant by this. It is indeed related, that the Persians, on occasions of great festivity, brought in their wives and concubines to feast with them (*Herodotus*, v. 18. Compare Dan. v. 2, 3.), but it is impossible that the wife or concubine of an eastern king could have been the guest of another man, unless the king had been present, and had summoned her to the banquet. The history does not give any intimation that the king had ever honoured Haman with his presence at a feast; and Haman (v. 12.) is represented as speaking of the invitation to the private banquet as the last and crowning proof of the favour in which he was held.

17. "Nor drunk the wine of the drink offerings." Drink offerings were part of the worship of God, and are often mentioned (Gen. xxxv. 14. Lev. xxiii. 18, 37. Num. vi. 15; xv. 5, 7, 10, &c.); they were also frequently employed in the worship of false gods (Deut. xxxii. 38. Is. lvii. 6; lxx. 11. Jer. vii. 18; xix. 13; xxxii. 29; xlv. 17, 18, 19, 25. Ezek. xx. 28.). A portion only of the wine would be poured out as a libation, and the rest would be consumed. In like manner, in the case of animals offered in sacrifice, the greater part would be eaten or sold, though the whole was considered to have been consecrated to the idol by virtue of the portion offered on the altar; hence, the prohibitions and scruples about eating things offered unto idols, of which we read in later times. See, for instance, Acts xv. 29; xxi. 25. Rev. ii. 14, 20. 1 Cor. x. 21 ("the cup of devils"), 25—28. Comp. Dan. i. 5, 8, a passage, which may not improbably have been in the mind of the writer: "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." *Herodotus*, however (i. 132.), says that the Persians did not build altars, nor light a fire, nor use libations in their sacrifices.

ESTHER, XV.

the day ²that I was brought hither to this pre-² Gr. of my
sent, but in thee, O Lord God of Abraham. *change.*

19 O thou mighty God above all, hear the voice of the forlorn, and deliver us out of the hands of the mischievous, and deliver me out of my fear.

CHAPTER XV.

6 *Esther cometh into the king's presence.* 7 *He looketh angrily, and she fainteth.* 8 *The king doth take her up, and comfort her.*

AND upon the third day, when she had ended her prayer, she laid away her mourning garments, and put on her glorious apparel.

2 And being gloriously adorned, after she had called upon God, who is the beholder and saviour of all things, she took two maids with her :

19. "O thou mighty God above all, hear the voice of the forlorn." Compare Judith ix. 12. "The forlorn;" literally, "them that are "without hope," as in the prayer of Judith (ix. 11.). The writer would also read the word in his copy (Greek) of Is. xxix. 19.

"Deliver me out of my fear." Compare Gen. xxxii. 11. Ps. lix. 1, 2; xxxiv. 4.

CHAPTER XV.

The Interview of Esther with the King.

This chapter, in the Greek, supplies the place of the brief narrative in Esth. v. 1, 2. At the end of it, after ver. 16, the Greek Version goes on with the translation of Esth. v. 3, "Then said the king, what wilt thou, Esther?" &c., and follows the narrative in Esther to viii. 13. Josephus also gives all this story, to much the same effect as the writer here. The author, no doubt, intended this account to be very affecting; it must be left to the reader to decide whether, on the contrary, he has not rather succeeded in producing that effect which is the reverse of sublime.

1. "Mourning garments." Literally, "garments of her service;" that is, the service of fasting, prayer, and humiliation, which she had performed unto God. Compare, in the Greek, Joel i. 14. Eccus. xxxv. 16.

"Put on her glorious apparel." Literally, "her glory" (so 1 Macc. xiv. 9. 1 Esdr. iv. 17.).

2. "After she had called upon God, who is the beholder and saviour of all things." Though the writer in this book is but describing things from his imagination, yet we may be content, as from works of fiction in our own day, to take a hint from anything which the story may supply of that which may be wise or pious for ourselves to do. It is well, when we have to undertake any work of seeming difficulty and danger, not only with diligence and devotion to pray beforehand, if time and opportunity be afforded, but to

ESTHER, XV.

3 and upon the one she leaned, as carrying herself ²daintily;

² Or, delicately.

4 and the other followed, bearing up her train.

³ Or, rose-coloured.

5 And she was ³ruddy through the perfection of her beauty, and her countenance was cheerful and ⁴very amiable: but her heart was in anguish for fear.

⁴ Or, as amiable, or, smiling.

6 Then having passed through all the doors, she stood before the king, who sat upon his royal throne, and was clothed with all his robes of majesty, all glittering with gold and precious stones; and he was very dreadful.

7 Then lifting up his countenance that shone with majesty, he looked very fiercely upon her: and the queen fell down, and was pale, and fainted, and bowed herself upon the head of the maid that went ⁵before her.

⁵ Or, with her, or, by her.

8 Then God changed the spirit of the king into mildness, who ⁶in a fear leaped from his throne, and took her in his arms, till she came to herself

⁶ Gr. in an agony.

offer up a brief and earnest supplication, in heart if not in words, at the very time when we are entering on the adventure itself (Neh. ii. 4.).

2—4. "She took two maids with her." The maids, it may be supposed, would, by accompanying Esther, run the same risk as herself. Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 9.) describes with great particularity, as if he had been there to see, how the "other maid which followed after, "lifted up her large train, which swept along the ground, with the "extremities of her fingers." Josephus had said before (XI. vi. 3.), that men with axes in their hands stood round about the throne in order to punish those who approached without being called.

3. "And upon the one she leaned." Compare 2 Kin. v. 18; vii. 2, 17.

7. "He looked very fiercely upon her." This fierceness of the king is supplied by the imagination of the writer. So far from there being anything to suggest it in Esther, we should, on the contrary, infer that the king graciously received her as soon as he saw her: "And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in "the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held "out to Esther the golden sceptre" (v. 2.). St. Augustine (see on xiv. 13.), when relating this story, the fear of Esther, her sinking through faintness upon the maid that was before her, &c., quotes a passage which is not found in our present Greek and Latin copies: "the king," he says, "looked upon her, as it is written, like a bull charging in "the fury of his wrath."

8. "Then God changed the spirit of the king." See St. Augustine on xiv. 13. Compare Prov. xxi. 1.

ESTHER, XV.

again, and comforted her with loving words, and said unto her,

9 Esther, what is the matter? I am thy brother, be of good cheer :

10 thou shalt not die, though our commandment be ² general : come near.

11 And so he held up his golden sceptre, and laid it upon her neck,

² Or, as
well thine
as mine.

12 and embraced her, and said, Speak unto me.

13 Then said she unto him, I saw thee, my lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled for fear of thy majesty.

14 For wonderful art thou, lord, and thy countenance is full of grace.

15 And as she was speaking, ³ she fell down for faintness.

³ Or, she fell
in a swoon.

16 Then the king was troubled, and all his servants comforted her.

CHAPTER XVI.

¹ The letter of Artaxerxes, 10 wherein he taxeth Aman, 17 and revoketh the decree procured by Aman to destroy the Jews, 22 and commandeth the day of their deliverance to be kept holy.

9. "I am thy brother." Thy husband, not as lord and master, but as friend and equal. One of the titles given to the bride in the Song of Solomon, is "sister" (iv. 9, 10.).

10. "Thou shalt not die, though our commandment be general." Josephus paraphrases thus (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 9.), "because that law was "made for subjects, but that she, who was a queen, as well as he a king, "might be entirely secure."

13. "I saw thee, my lord, as an angel of God." Compare 1 Sam. xxix. 9. 2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20; xix. 27. Gen. xxxiii. 10.

13, 14. Esther, in her speech, as a commentary on her faintness and terror, shows herself an accomplished courtier, and succeeds in flattering with much dexterity the vanity of the king.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Second Letter of Artaxerxes.

This letter is inserted into Esth. viii. 13. It is given also at length, and to the same general purport, in Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 12.). It may, perhaps, be thought that the author of this piece of rhetorical writing has succeeded fairly well in composing a letter as unlike as possible to anything which, it may be supposed, the original could have been. The substance of the real letter, which was apparently very brief, is given in Esth. viii. 11, 12. Such compositions are useful, by way of contrast to the historical writings of the period, preserved in the

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Joseph.
Antiq. lib.
11. cap. 6.

THE great king Artaxerxes unto the princes and governors of an hundred and seven and twenty provinces from India unto Ethiopia, and unto all² our faithful subjects, greeting.

² Or, *well affected to our state.*

³ Gr. *their benefactors.*

2 Many, the more often they are honoured with the great bounty of³ their gracious princes, the more proud they are waxen,

3 and endeavour to hurt not our subjects only, but not being able to bear abundance, do take in hand to practise also against those that do them good :

4 and take not only thankfulness away from among men, but also lifted up with the glorious words of⁴ lewd persons, ⁵ that were never good, they think to escape the justice of God, that seeth all things, and hateth evil.

⁴ Or, *needy.*

⁵ Or, *that never tasted prosperity.*

⁶ Or, *of our friends, put in trust to manage the affairs.*

5 Oftentimes also fair speech⁶ of those, that are put in trust to manage their friends' affairs, hath caused many that are in authority to be partakers

Canonical Books; they show us the kind of things we should have found in a fictitious story, written by one living at a later time, under different circumstances, and an altered tone of thought and feeling.

1. "The great king Artaxerxes," &c. See xiii. 1.

"Greeting." See 1 Esdr. vi. 7; viii. 9.

3. "Those that do them good." The word thus rendered only differs in grammatical form from that rendered "gracious princes" in ver. 2. It is literally (compare the *Margin*, ver. 2.) "benefactors," a name which princes were fond of assuming (see St. Luke xxii. 25.). One of the most familiar instances is that of Ptolemy Euergetes ("Benefactor"), King of Egypt, who died 221 B.C. The name in itself is good; no more flattering title could be devised by courtiers; and, so far as it was deserved, no better title could be given to a king.

4. "Glorious;" that is, boastful. Though this word is not now used in this sense, it was frequently so used, as in the Latin, by earlier writers. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 7, "Why dost thou *glory*, as if thou hadst not received it?" v. 6, "Your *glorying* is not good." Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.*, V. lxxi. 7, "They whose wits are too *glorious*" (self-confident, boastful) "to sink to so low an ebb." Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 334, "If old respect . . . toward your once *gloried* friend." See also *Par. Lost*, i. 239.

"The justice of God, that seeth all things, and hateth evil." Compare ver. 18. See also acknowledgments of the sovereignty and providence of "the Most High and Most Mighty Living God," in vv. 16 and 21. In the original, the word rendered "that hateth evil" is an epithet of the Justice or Vengeance, which in a kind of way is personified (compare Acts xxviii. 4.). "The justice that hateth evil, the evil-hating justice, of God that seeth all things."

"That seeth all things." Compare xv. 2.

of innocent blood, and hath enwrapped them in remediless calamities :

6 beguiling with the falsehood and deceit of their lewd disposition the innocency and goodness of princes.

7 Now ye may see this, as we have declared, not so much by ancient histories, as ye may, if ye search what hath been wickedly done of late through the pestilent behaviour of them that are unworthily placed in authority.

8 And we must take care for the time to come, that our kingdom may be quiet and peaceable for all men,

9 both by changing our purposes, and always judging things that are evident with more equal proceeding.

10 For Aman, a Macedonian, the son of Amadatha, being indeed a stranger from the Persian blood, and far distant from our goodness, and as a stranger received of us,

11 had so far forth obtained the favour that we shew toward every nation, as that he was called our father, and was continually honoured of all men, as the next person unto the king.

8. "That our kingdom may be quiet and peaceable for all men." See xiii. 2.

9. "By changing our purposes." If we keep to this reading, this open confession of change of purpose is in contradiction to Esth. viii. 8 (see *Note*). Inasmuch as a writing, once written in the king's name and sealed with the king's seal, no man might, at least in set terms, presume to reverse, the very object of the letter (Esth. viii. 9—13.) was to avoid in words any formal acknowledgment of change of purpose, while permitting in reality the reversal of the decree. The reading is, however, uncertain. The Alexandrian copy of the Greek inserts "not,"—"not using" (giving way to) "changes;" that is, sudden and causeless changes of purpose. And the Latin (*Vulgate*) gives a long paraphrase of this: "And you ought not to think, if we order things different" (from those ordered in our former decree), "that this proceeds from the fickleness of our mind, but rather that we give our judgment according to the state and need of the times, as the advantage of the commonwealth demands." Some, perhaps, may be inclined to adopt on conjecture the reading which Josephus seems to have found in his copy, which had apparently made a slight alteration in one of the words, so as to read, "not using" (availing ourselves of, listening to) "false accusations."

10. "Aman, a Macedonian." Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 12.), alters this to "Amalekite," in order to make it agree with what he had already said (XI. vi. 5.). See above, on xii. 6.

11. "Was called our father." See above, xiii. 6, "Our second father."

12 But he, not bearing his great dignity, went about to deprive us of our kingdom and life :

13 having by manifold and cunning deceits sought of us the destruction, as well of Mardocheus, who saved our life, and continually procured our good, as also of blameless Esther, partaker of our kingdom, with their whole nation.

14 For by these means he thought, finding us destitute of friends, to have translated the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedonians.

15 But we find that the Jews, whom this wicked wretch hath delivered to utter destruction, are no evildoers, but live by most just laws :

16 and that they be children of the most high and

"Father" is not unfrequently used in a similar way, as a term of honour and respect (Gen. xlv. 8. 2 Kin. ii. 12 ; v. 13 ; vi. 21 ; xiii. 14. 2 Chr. ii. 13 ; iv. 16. 1 Macc. xi. 32.). Josephus (*Antiq.* XII. iii. 4.), "King Antiochus to Zeuxis his father sendeth greeting."

14. "He thought . . . to have translated the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedonians." These words show that the writer lived long after the time of Esther and "Artaxerxes," and unconsciously transfers to these earlier times a thought which could only have been suggested by subsequent events to one living at a later period. Macedonia was unknown as a kingdom of any power or influence till the reign of Philip, who was assassinated B.C. 336, and succeeded by his son Alexander the Great, the conqueror of Persia (1 Macc. vi. 2.). This passage could hardly have been written till after the dominion of the East had passed into the hands of those who, on Alexander's death (B.C. 323), divided his conquests among them (1 Macc. i. 1—9.). In the reign of Darius (Ezra vi. 1.), Macedonia had submitted to the Persians (*Herodotus*, v. 18 ; vi. 44.); and in the later invasion of Greece, in which Mardonius was defeated and slain at Platea (B.C. 479.), in the reign of the son of Darius, Xerxes (the Ahasuerus of Esther), Alexander, the King of Macedonia, accompanied the Persian army as an unwilling ally, who secretly rendered service to the Greeks (*Herodotus*, ix. 44.). Josephus (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 12.) seeks to avoid the difficulty by using general terms, "to deprive me of my faithful friends, and transfer the "government to others." But even this is wide of the mark ; for there is not in the historical narrative in Esther the slightest intimation of any attempt to transfer the Persian supremacy to some other rival dominion, but only an account of a plot to destroy the Jews.

"Translated." "Translate" is almost obsolete now, as used to denote in a general sense, "to transfer," "to remove" (Ecclus. x. 8. 2 Sam. iii. 10. Compare Col. i. 13.), though we still speak of the "translation" of Enoch, taking the word from Heb. xi. 5 (compare Wisd. iv. 10. 2 Macc. xi. 23.); and of the "translation" of a bishop from one see to another.

16. "Children of the most high . . . God;" ver. 21, "the chosen people." The Jewish writer, however anxious to glorify his nation,

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most mighty living God, who hath ²ordered the ²Or, prospered. kingdom both unto us and to our progenitors in the most excellent manner.

17 Wherefore ye shall do well not to put in execution the letters sent unto you by Aman the son of Amadatha.

18 For he, that was the worker of these things, is hanged at the gates of Susa with all his family :

might have seen that it was hardly consistent with the probabilities of the case that a heathen king, in a proclamation to his heathen subjects, should have used such expressions as these, or that Mardocheus, if he drew up this letter in the king's name, would have ventured to offend the pride of the ruling people by applying such lofty designations to Jews.

"Children of . . . God." Deut. xiv. 1, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God." Compare Hos. i. 10. See also Exod. iv. 22. Hos. xi. 1. Jer. xxxi. 9. This title is not often given to the children of Israel, though frequently occurring in the New Testament as the distinction of Christians, the new Israel (St. John i. 12. Rom. viii. 14, 16; ix. 8, 26; Gal. iii. 26; iv. 5—7. Phil. ii. 15. 1 John iii. 1, 2.).

"Most high and most mighty living God." We have here combined together titles of God, which, separately, are constantly given to Him in Holy Scripture. For instance, "High God," or "Most High God" (Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20, 22. Ps. lvii. 2; lxxviii. 35. Dan. iii. 26. Micah vi. 6, &c.); "Mighty God" (Deut. vii. 21; x. 17. Neh. ix. 32. Ps. l. 1. Jer. xxxii. 18, &c.); "Living God" (Deut. v. 26. Josh. iii. 10. 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 36. 2 Kin. xix. 4. Ps. xlii. 2; lxxxiv. 2. Jer. x. 10. Dan. vi. 26. Hos. i. 10, &c.).

"Who hath ordered the kingdom both unto us and to our progenitors in the most excellent manner." The decrees of the Kings of Persia, preserved in the Book of Ezra, contain some remarkable acknowledgments of the rule and providence of God. Thus we read in the decree of Cyrus, "The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth" (Ezra i. 2. 2 Chr. xxxvi. 23.). "God of heaven;" see also Ezra vi. 10; vii. 23. Compare Deut. xxxii. 8 (a). Acts xvii. 26 (b).

18. "Hanged" (in the Greek, "crucified") at the gates of Susa "with all his family." So Josephus, *Antiq.* XI. vi. 12. According to the account in the Book of Esther, Haman's "house," his possessions and slaves, were given to Esther; and his ten sons did not die till some months after the issuing of the king's letter,—nor did they die by crucifixion; but after they had been slain by the Jews, their dead bodies were afterwards, at Esther's request, hung up, in order, it would seem, to render the retribution more impressive (Esth. ix. 1, 10, 13, 14, compared with viii. 9.). The writer seems to have forgotten this part of the narrative of the Book of Esther, which is duly given in its order, contradicting the statements here, further on, when the translation of the Book of Esther is proceeded with.

18. (Crucified) "with all his family." Dan. vi. 24 will supply an illustration of this barbarous custom, by which, for one man's guilt, all his

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God, who ruleth all things, speedily rendering vengeance to him according to his deserts.

19 Therefore ye shall publish the copy of this letter in all places, that the Jews may freely live after their own laws.

20 And ye shall aid them, that even the same day, being the thirteenth day of the twelfth month Adar, they may be avenged on them, who in the time of their affliction shall set upon them.

21 For Almighty God hath turned to joy unto them the day, wherein the chosen people should have perished.

22 Ye shall therefore among your solemn feasts keep it an high day with all feasting :

relatives were doomed to perish. Compare 2 Kin. ix. 26. Herodotus (iii. 119.) relates that Darius, the father of Xerxes, assuming that all the relatives, and even connections, of the offender were sharers in a supposed intention of plotting against him, ordered them to be put to death. Compare also Josh. vii. 24, 25. This practice was forbidden by the Law (Deut. xxiv. 16. Compare 2 Kin. xiv. 6. 2 Chr. xxv. 4.).

19. "That the Jews may freely live after their own laws." This would be nothing to the purpose of the present letter, which was to grant that the Jews might have permission, notwithstanding the former decree, to stand for their lives, and slay those who should assault them (ver. 20. Esth. viii. 11.). As, however, the Jews highly valued the permission to live under their own laws, not only in Judæa (Ezra vii. 25, 26.), but in other countries also (Josephus, *Antiq.* XII. iii. 2, 4.), the writer seems to have thought that it might be well to represent this king also as conferring the like privilege.

20. "The thirteenth day." Esth. viii. 12; ix. 1. Here correctly; but this contradicts xiii. 6.

21. "Almighty God hath turned to joy." This declaration is somewhat premature, in a letter purporting to be written before the time at which the Jews were to be assailed by their enemies, when it must needs have been in uncertainty what the issue might be. Josephus turns it into a prayer (*Antiq.* XI. vi. 12.): "And may it be a good day to those that wish us well, and a memorial of the punishment of the conspirators against us."

"The chosen people." This expression shows that the composer of this letter of "King Artaxerxes" was a Jew (see on ver. 16.). "Chosen people." Compare such passages as Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2; xxvi. 18. Exod. xix. 5, 6. 1 Kin. iii. 8. Ps. xxxiii. 12. Is. xli. 8, 9. Compare also Rom. xi. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 9. 4 Esdr. vi. 54. The Jews of the dispersion highly prized the privileges of their election (4 Esdr. v. 23—27. Esth. xiii. 15; xiv. 5, 9. Compare Rom. ix. 4.).

22. "Ye shall therefore among your solemn feasts keep it an high day." "Solemn" hardly suggests the meaning with sufficient exactness. The original words denote feasts which have a special name,

23 that both now and hereafter there may be safety to us, and the well affected Persians; but to those which do conspire against us a memorial of destruction.

24 Therefore every city and country whatsoever, which shall not do according to these things, shall be destroyed without mercy with fire and sword, and shall be made not only unpassable for men, but also most hateful to wild beasts and fowls for ever.

a name significant of the event they were appointed to record. The Feast of Purim would be exactly such a feast, bearing its own significant and allusive name (Esth. ix. 26—28.), among the yearly festivals. The writer, however, does not seem to perceive the absurdity of making the king command that this feast should be kept, not by the Jews only, but should be observed as a general yearly festival by his subjects throughout the vast Persian Empire; not to speak of the incongruity of ordering long beforehand that a festival should be kept as a memorial of a deliverance not yet accomplished. Josephus judiciously omits this injunction of the king respecting the observance of the festival.

“Keep it.” The king’s letter would seem to imply that the festival was to be kept on the thirteenth day of Adar; but the feast of Purim was to be held on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar (Esth. ix. 21; x. 13.).

23. “Safety to us, and the well affected Persians . . . to those which “do conspire against us.” There had been no danger to the king or to the Persians, nor any conspiracy against them, except in the imagination of the writer of ver. 14.

24. “Shall be made not only unpassable for men, but also most “hateful to wild beasts and fowls for ever.” Josephus omits this rhetorical exaggeration. It is taken from those descriptions of desolation in the prophets which speak of cutting off man and beast (Jer. xxxii. 43; xxxiii. 10; 1. 3. Ezek. xiv. 13, 17; xxv. 13; xxix. 8, 11; xxxii. 13.), and consuming the fowls of heaven (Jer. iv. 25; ix. 10; xii. 4.), and the fishes of the sea (Hos. iv. 3. Zeph. i. 3.). Elsewhere, the most natural way of setting forth the desolation of a district, when the cultivated land has returned back again to wildness, is to portray it as the dwellingplace of wild beasts and birds (Exod. xxiii. 29; Deut. vii. 22; Is. xiv. 23; xxxiv. 11, 13—15. Jer. l. 39; li. 37. Zeph. ii. 14. Rev. xviii. 2.).

After the ending of the king’s letter, the Book of Esther, in the Greek (LXX.), returns to Esth. viii. 13, and follows Esther to the end of the book at x. 3. But after x. 3, the Greek adds on the narrative printed here as chap. x. 4—13, in which it is related that Mardocheus remembered his dream, and now understood its meaning.

The book concludes with the note, which is printed here as xi. 1.

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS book is called "The Wisdom of Solomon." In the ancient Greek and Latin editions of the Old Testament it is placed after the Song of Solomon, and is followed by "Ecclesiasticus," or the "Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach." These two Apocryphal Books were often classified with the three Canonical Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The five were described as "sapiential books," and were supposed to contain the moral precepts of Solomon, and of those who followed him in his teaching.

The author of Wisdom was a Jew of Alexandria, who was probably either contemporary with the Son of Sirach, or a little later, in the second century before Christ. He was certainly a learned and devout man, who possessed some knowledge of the philosophy of Plato, and of Greek poetry and literature. In a portion of the book he puts his words into the mouth of Solomon, and hence some writers have thought that he collected some traditional sayings of Solomon, and mingled them with the ideas of a later age. Others suppose that he only introduced Solomon by a figure of speech, much employed by Greek philosophers and rhetoricians, by which persons of fame, like Socrates, Cyrus, and others, were made to speak in dialogues on abstract truths. This view is confirmed by the contents of the book, which show but little resemblance in language or style to the genuine books of Solomon, or to any of the sacred writers, though there are several remarkable allusions to the prophecies of Isaiah. The author appears to have read the Old Testament in the Greek Version, for his references to Isaiah follow the Septuagint rather than the received Hebrew text. The original language of the book was manifestly Greek; its style is, as St. Jerome said of it, redolent with Greek eloquence. A Chaldee Version of it is mentioned by Rabbinical writers, and Grotius supposed that it might be a free translation from the Chaldee, executed by some Christian author. This theory is, however, generally abandoned. The general tenour of the book is such as would be expected from a Jew of Alexandria; the description of the plagues in the latter part is full of Egyptian ideas; and the philosophy of the book is such as is known from other sources to have been adopted by the Jews, who were influenced by the Greek schools of Alexandria. Many of the ancients ascribed it to Philo Judæus, the great Jewish philosopher; some later writers mention an older Philo as a possible author of the book. Some recent enquirers have argued that it was written by one of the ascetics called "Therapeutæ," or, by a bolder conjecture, ascribe it to Apollos. But the proofs of the later date fall short of conviction. There are good reasons for ascribing the book to an earlier stage of the period during which the Jews came under the influence of Greek philosophy.

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The Book of Wisdom manifestly consists of two parts. The first (chaps. i.—ix. inclusive), is a kind of homily, or exhortation, addressed to the kings and rulers of the earth, concluding with a prayer for wisdom, in which the author speaks in the person and character of Solomon. The second part (chaps. x.—xix.), is a sequel, or appendix to the former, written with a different object, and mostly framed in a devotional form, addressed to the Deity. This part has been ascribed by some to a different author; but the difference of style, or thought, may be accounted for, if we suppose that it was written at a different time, and for another purpose. The author's first object was to exalt the Divine Wisdom, which is derived from the Book of the Covenant of the Most High God (Ecclus. xxiv. 23.), in comparison with the human wisdom or philosophy, which was then in Alexandria asserting its superiority to the Hebrew religion. The conception of "wisdom" is a manifold one. It includes everything that tends to exalt human nature; it is the gift of government, necessary for kings, and the means by which man is brought near to God, the supreme Ruler of all. It embraces all virtues which are to be learned from God's law. It is the light of truth, revealing to the understanding all kinds of knowledge and science, skill in workmanship, or in the control of other men. Thus, the true "philosophy" is the love of God and His laws, and the study of His revealed will.

This being the main object of the first part of the book, there are certain digressions, to speak of the folly of impiety, which degraded man, and deprived him of the true wisdom. The chief folly denounced is that of the Epicureans and sensualists, who scorned the expectation of a future state. These men are represented, in chap. ii., as conspiring against the child of God to put him to a shameful death, because he boasted that God was His Father. But their sensuality should bring sudden ruin upon them. Their worldly prosperity should become a snare and a curse to them. Had they a numerous posterity? Their children should be a bastard and degenerate brood, corrupted by their vices, and bringing disgrace upon them. But the case of the just man, though his life is counted as madness, and his end dishonourable, though he dies childless, with no posterity to perpetuate his name, is the very opposite of this. His death is not a torment, but a translation, a release from evil; and though his life is shortened, this is because he, being made perfect in a short time, has fulfilled a long time. This part of the book may be regarded as a strong protest against Sadduceanism, or the notion of mere earthly rewards as the motive for the practice of virtue; and it represents the faith that armed the Jews to remain constant to their Law in the persecution of Antiochus, when they were tortured that they might obtain a better resurrection.

The second part of the book (chaps. x.—xix.) bears marks of being written partly to meet the objections of the learned heathen against the Hebrew Scriptures. This may be inferred partly from the praises of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, and other Old Testament characters who were assailed by the unbelievers; but especially from the argument on the destruction of the idolatrous Canaanites. The author pleads that even in their case judgment was mixed with mercy, for they were expelled gradually, some being taken, and others being left, that the survivors might take warning, and repent. The passages about God's patience and deliberation are some of the finest and most sublime in the

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book. After this, the author proceeds to a lengthy discussion of the evils and follies of idolatry, tracing its various causes,—the admiration of the powers of Nature, or respect for the dead, or the flattery of princes. He speaks separately of household gods, nautical idols, and idols of stone, wood, and earthenware. His conclusion is, that idolatry is the beginning, the end, and the cause of all evil. From chaps. xvi.—xix. he reviews the plagues of Egypt, and contrasts them with the miracles of mercy or judgment which God worked for His people in the desert. In chap. xvii. he dwells at some length upon the plague of darkness in Egypt, treating it as an image of hell, and a foretaste of the undying worm of conscience by which the guilty shall be tormented. This part of the book shows that the author had some acquaintance with the poetry and mythology, as well as with the philosophy, of the Greeks.

The Book of Wisdom has been highly esteemed by the Fathers, and by the Divines of the Church of England, for the noble and sublime sayings which it contains on God, the soul, and immortality. Some ancient writers recommended it especially to catechumens and enquirers, as an introduction to the knowledge of the Scriptures. Dr. T. Jackson spoke of it as “an excellent and most elegant paraphrase upon many Canonical Scriptures, containing many excellent expressions of God’s special providence and infinite wisdom in governing the world, and “in overruling both the policy and the power of the greatest princes.” “The penman of it,” he says, “was a truly religious and sanctified man, “who sought to imitate the writings of the prophets and other authors “of the Sacred Volume.” Bishop Bull wrote: “The Wisdom of Solomon “is an ancient and venerable writing, undoubtedly extant before our “Saviour’s time. It is a competent and sufficient witness of the faith “and belief of the Church in the time wherein it was written.” Hooker, who described the Apocryphal Books as a “marginal border” unto the Old Testament, frequently referred to the Book of Wisdom, and several elegant paraphrases and applications of its contents may be found in his works.

The book shows, in several places, a familiarity with the prophecies of Isaiah,—especially with Is. xxii. 13; xxviii. 14, 15, 18; xl. 13—20; xli. 6, 7; xliv. 12—20; lvi. 3—5; lvii. 1, 2, 16; and chap. ii. is partly based upon the prophecy of the righteous servant of the Lord in Is. lii. 13—liii. 12. There are also allusions to Is. xxix. 16; xlv. 9; lxxv. 1.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, I.

CHAPTER I.

2 *To whom God sheweth himself, 4 and wisdom herself. 6 An evil speaker cannot lie hid. 12 We procure our own destruction: 13 for God created not death.*

LOVE righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth: think of the Lord with a good (heart,) and in simplicity of heart seek him. ^a Deut. 1. 16.
¹ Kin. 3. 3.
Ps. 45. 7.
Is. 56. 1.

2 For he will be found of them that tempt him not; and sheweth himself unto such as do not ^b distrust him. ^b Deut. 4. 29.
2 Chr. 15. 4.

3 For froward thoughts separate from God: and his power, when it is tried, ²reproveth the unwise. ² Or, maketh manifest.

4 For into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter; nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin.

CHAPTER I.

1. Kings and rulers are exhorted to love God, the fountain of all righteousness. Since they stand in the place of God to men, they must take for their pattern the righteousness of God Himself, and learn the true wisdom from His holy laws (Ps. ii. 10, 11. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3. Eccles. i. 26.). Their hearts will be good, if they think of God, and of His goodness and mercy to the oppressed, and imitate the Divine pattern; if their aim is single and sincere, Divine truth will unfold itself to them. So we read of the single eye, in St. Matt. vi. 22, and singleness of heart, in Acts ii. 46, as opposed to duplicity or self-conceit.

2. God reveals His will to those who come to Him in sincerity, not tempting Him, or dissembling with Him, or seeking Him with a divided heart (Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37.), as the hypocrites who honour Him with their lips, whilst they are estranged from Him within by the perverseness of unbelief which distrusts His word (Is. xxix. 13, 14.).

3. Such perverseness provokes God to withhold His gifts from the soul, or it distracts the mind so that it cannot receive the light of His guidance. Those who prove God's power by provoking Him to punish them, are themselves thereby reprov'd, and convinced of their folly (Ps. xcv. 9.).

4. "The malicious soul, that devises evil or mischief, cannot apprehend the truth, or receive the good motions of the Holy Spirit; for "He will not abide in the body that is addicted to be the slave of sin." Sin is therefore the great hindrance to our reception of the things of God: sins of the flesh, because the carnal mind is enmity against God; sins of wrath and envy, because they destroy the inward calm which is necessary for the consideration of Divine things. Therefore, when the enemies of our Lord asked Him, "Art thou the Christ?" He replied, "If I tell you, ye will not believe." The malicious soul seeks to find reasons for unbelief rather than faith. Holiness is required in those who would come to the knowledge of the truth. "The fear of the Lord is "the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. cxi. 10.); and the soul that desires to know God must be washed from wickedness (Jer. iv. 14.), that God may dwell in it, and fill it with His light.

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^c Jer. 4. 22.

5 ^c For the holy spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding, and ² will not abide when unrighteousness cometh in.

² Or,
*is rebuked,
or, sheweth
itself.*

^d Gal. 5. 22.

6 For wisdom is a ^d loving spirit; and will not acquit a blasphemer of his ³ words: for God is witness of his reins, and a true beholder of his heart, and a hearer of his tongue.

³ Or, *lips.*

7 For the Spirit of the Lord filleth the world: and that which ⁴ containeth all things hath knowledge of the voice.

⁴ Or,
upholdeth.

5. "The Holy Spirit, who is the teacher of wisdom and discipline, will have no place in the soul that is defiled by deceit or hypocrisy; "He will not alway strive with man" (or, "abide with man," according to the LXX. in Gen. vi. 3.), "but He will withdraw as one reproved "when the iniquity which He abhors enters in." Whilst Adam was upright, the Holy Spirit was with him; when he fell, and dissembled with God, the Spirit of discipline fled from his deceit. For the same reason, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul; yet Saul, even after he had been thus forsaken, prophesied (1 Sam. xvi. 14; xix. 21—23.). Wicked men, like Balaam, saw visions, and prophesied; and the same is said of Caiaphas, the enemy of Christ. So the Spirit of God is present to give effect to the ministrations of the unworthy, a dispensation being committed to them for the sake of others, even when His grace is excluded from their hearts. According to the literal sense here, the Spirit of the Lord is said to be "reproved" by man's sin, as He is said to be "vexed," in Is. lxiii. 10; "grieved," in Eph. iv. 30; or, "resisted," in Acts vii. 51.

6. "For wisdom is a spirit of kindness and benevolence, and will not "purge the blasphemer from the sin of his lips; for the secret thoughts "and desires of men's hearts, as well as the words of their mouths, are "known to God, and subject to His oversight." So, in vii. 23, wisdom is said to be "benevolent," or "kind to man." But, though God is merciful, He will not hold the blasphemer guiltless (Exod. xx. 6, 7.); though He shows mercy to thousands of them that love Him, He is severe in punishing him that taketh His name in vain. He is also an exact beholder of all our ways, and a searcher of our hearts (Prov. xv. 3. 1 Kin. viii. 39.).

7. "For the Spirit of the Lord fills the world, and no part of the "universe is excluded from His presence and oversight; and every voice "is heard by the Divine Being, who comprehends and upholds all things." Thus He says, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. xxiii. 24.); and the Psalmist exclaims, "Whither shall I go then from Thy spirit?" (Ps. cxxxix. 7.). The operations of the Spirit of the Lord are as seven eyes, which run to and fro through the whole earth (Zech. iv. 10.). Heathen philosophy conceived that there was a Soul of the Universe, setting the whole in motion, and causing the various material bodies to attract or repel one another. These operations Christian doctrine ascribed to the Eternal Spirit of God (Gen. i. 2.). "This," says Cyril,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, I.

8 Therefore he that speaketh unrighteous things cannot be hid: neither shall vengeance, when it punisheth, pass by him.

9 For inquisition shall be made into the counsels of the ungodly: and the sound of his words shall come unto the Lord for the ²manifestation of his ²Or, *reproving.* wicked deeds.

10 For the ear of jealousy heareth all things: and the noise of murmurings is not hid.

11 Therefore beware of murmuring, which is unprofitable; and refrain your tongue from backbiting: for there is no word so secret, that shall go

“is the nature that is Divine, and the Giver of life. For He is the Spirit of the uncreated God, His own Spirit, proceeding from Him; a self-existent and living Being, who exists eternally. He is the Spirit of Him who is, and He fills all things, and encompasses all things, being of one substance with Him who fills all things, and exists everywhere without distribution or division of essence. For all things are full of Him, as it is written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the world.’” “He is present wholly everywhere, and quickens every part by Himself, for in Him we live and move, and have our being.” The power of the Spirit, as it fills all space, so it extends throughout all time; all that is good or holy in men or angels, in the inspiration of prophets, or the wisdom of heathen philosophers, being His gift. He instructed Bezaleel in workmanship, as well as Moses in the knowledge of Divine things. Since the breath of life, language, and speech is His gift, He perceives all the utterances of the human voice (Ps. xciv. 9; cxxxix. 4.). There is a book of remembrance before the Lord, and the “words that have been stout against Him” are all recorded (Mal. iii. 13, 16.).

8, 9. “Therefore the slanderer shall not escape; he shall be convicted by the Divine justice, and his offence shall not be passed over. There shall be a strict enquiry into the purposes of the wicked, and the sound of his words shall be before the Lord for a proof of his misdeeds.” This judgment of God is anticipated by the inner tribunal of conscience, whereby the ungodly are self-condemned (Rom. ii. 14, 15.). Their evil words show the evil within, the “evil treasure of the heart” (St. Luke vi. 45.).

10, 11. “Even man’s jealousy makes Him listen to everything, and watch for every word that is whispered against him; much more should the dread of Him, who is the witness of all our actions, restrain us from vain murmuring, detraction, and other sins of the tongue; for the most secret utterance is not without its effect, and the lying mouth slays the soul.” The oaths by which men confirm their covenants testify to this, and show that they know that, though they may deceive one another, or conceal the truth by mental reservation, there is an ear which hears all,—even their very thoughts; and that the deceiver cannot escape His judgment. See 1 Kin. viii. 31, 32. Prov. xix. 9. Ps. v. 6.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, I.

² Or, *slandereſh*. for nought: and the mouth that ²belieth slayeth the soul.

^e Deut. 4. 23, 24. 12 Seek not death in the error of your life: and pull not upon yourselves ^edestruction with the works of your hands.

^f Ezek. 18. 32. & 33. 11. 13 For God made not death: ^fneither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living.

^g Gen. 1. 31. 14 For he created all things, that they might have their being: ^gand the generations of the world were healthful; and there is no poison of destruction in them, nor the kingdom of death upon the earth:

15 (for righteousness is immortal:)

12. "In your eager pursuit of the things which you desire, see that "you err not, and find death instead of life, and bring ruin upon "yourselves by your own actions." Those who sin, whether by lying or stealing, or otherwise, in order to save their lives, will find that death and not life is the end to which their conduct is bringing them. So our Lord said of those who should betray the truth through fear of death, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (St. Matt. xvi. 25.).

13. "For it was by man's error, and not by God's original appointment, that death entered into the world. He can have no pleasure in "the destruction of the life which is His gift." Though His justice annexed death as the punishment of sin, and though it was by His decree that death reigned over Adam and his posterity, and the Deluge afterwards swept away a whole generation of mankind from the earth, yet His work is life, and not death. He is the Maker and Preserver of souls; destruction, murder, and death proceed from His enemy, Satan. The life of man is precious in His sight, "for in the image of God made He "man" (Gen. ix. 6.). The reign of death was permitted for a time for man's correction, but it was not to be perpetual. A remedy was provided by the promise of the Seed of the woman, because God had no pleasure in the destruction of souls. The Redeemer should "swallow "up death in victory" (Is. xxv. 8.). The saying of the prophet (Hos. xiii. 9.) might be applied to our first parents: "O Adam, thou wast the "cause of thine own and of our destruction; but of our salvation, in and "through the promised seed, our gracious Creator is the sole cause and "Author" (*Jackson*).

14, 15. "He created all things that they might continue in their "being, and the generations of the world were designed to preserve and "increase life; there was no deadly poison in them, nor was the earth "subject to the kingdom of hell, for righteousness had the promise of "immortality." The word of the Creator was, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Gen. i. 28.). He spoke of life, and not death; and man was moreover made in the image of God, and was therefore designed for immortality. The poison or infection which corrupted life was not in the human generations by nature. It came to them from without. If

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, II.

16 but ungodly men with their works and words called *it* to them: for when they thought to have it their friend, they consumed to nought, and made a covenant with it, because they are worthy to take part with it.

CHAPTER II.

¹ *The wicked think this life short, 5 and of no other after this: 6 therefore they will take their pleasure in this, 10 and conspire against the just. 21 What that is which doth blind them.*

FOR the *ungodly* said, reasoning with themselves, but not aright, ^a Our life is short and tedious, ^a Job 7. 1. ^b and in the death of a man there is no remedy: ^b Matt. 22. 23. 1 Cor. 15. 32. neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave.

2 For we are born at all adventure: and we shall

man had remained upright, he would have been preserved from all hurtful things, from noxious herbs and fruits, from wild beasts and serpents, as well as from the contagion of disease. Even now that death reigns, and hell, or Hades, holds us in subjection, we believe that its power has an end, and that life shall finally prevail. Since the first man might have attained to immortality by obedience, there is hope that the righteous will live for evermore; for Wisdom "is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her" (Prov. iii. 18.).

16. "But ungodly men invite death by their words and works; for they say in their hearts, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement;' they vainly suppose that when the scourge of Divine wrath overtakes others, they shall escape, and that death will spare them, as if they were his friends and allies" (Is. xxviii. 14, 15.); "therefore they waste away, being worthy to become the portion of him whom they have chosen." So the wicked (in Ps. x. 6.) say in their heart, "I shall not be moved; for I shall never be in adversity." But the prophet replies, "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it" (Is. xxviii. 18, 19.).

CHAPTER II.

1. "For these wicked men, who supposed that they could make a covenant with death" (i. 16.), "thus reasoned with themselves in their error and folly: 'Our life is short, and full of labour and sorrow'" (Job xiv. 1, 2. Eccles. ii. 22, 23.), "'and no remedy can stay the hand of death'" (Eccles. viii. 8.); "'and none of the dead have returned to tell of a life beyond the grave. Let us, therefore, enjoy life whilst it is ours; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'" See Is. xxii. 12, 13.

2, 3. "It was by a mere chance that we came into existence; and when this life is over, we shall be as if we had never been. The

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, II.

be hereafter as though we had never been : for the breath in our nostrils is as smoke, and a little spark in the moving of our heart :

^c Eccles. 3.
20.

3 which being extinguished, ^cour body shall be turned into ashes, and our spirit shall vanish as the ²soft air,

² Or, moist.

4 and our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall have our works in remembrance, and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist, that is driven away with the beams of the sun, and ³overcome with the heat thereof.

³ Or,
oppressed.

^d 1 Chr. 29.
15.

5 ^dFor our time is a very shadow that passeth away ; and after our end there is no returning : for ⁴it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again.

⁴ Or, he.

6 Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things

"breath in our nostrils is mere smoke, and our speech is as a spark produced by the movement of the heart, the centre of vital heat in the body ; when we die, it will be as when a fire is extinguished, and cold ashes alone remain ; and our breath, together with the words which we have uttered, will be like the smoke of the fire, dispersed and mingled with the soft air, which leaves no traces of the things which pass through it." See v. 11, 12. Such was the false philosophy of the Epicureans, who denied a creation or a Providence, ascribing all to chance. According to them, human life began from nothing, and ended in nothing ; and as this took away the fear of punishment for all sin, so it made men especially bold to offend in word : they supposed that their speeches would pass away with the sounds which they uttered, and knew not of the day of reckoning for every idle word (St. Matt. xii. 36. Jude 15. Jer. v. 13, 14.).

4, 5. "As our life will vanish into emptiness, so our name and works shall be forgotten ; all that we have said or done will pass away like the mist which is the last vestige of a cloud, when it is absorbed or dispersed by the sun's rays and heat ; for our life is a passing shadow, and when the end comes, there is no retracing of our steps ; for the door of death is fast closed and sealed, and none can return who has entered by it." As the seal was set upon the sepulchre to prevent the removal of the corpse from its last restingplace (Dan. vi. 17. St. Matt. xxvii. 66.), so they supposed that when man goes to his long home, the door is closed for ever against his return.

6. "Therefore, they say, let us dismiss the dreams of a future life, and enjoy the good things that are realities ; let us use and enjoy our possessions with the eagerness of youth." The worldly account the visible things of the present life as the only realities ; all beyond it is to them as a dream ; but faith reverses this judgment, for it perceives that the fashion of this world passes away (1 Cor. vii. 31. 2 Cor. iv. 18.). To those who are lovers of pleasure, youth is the time of enjoyment ; old age then follows, depriving them of their mirth and feasting, and

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, II.

“that are present: and let us ²speedily use the creatures like as in youth.”

[•] Is. 22. 13.
& 56. 12.
¹ Cor. 15. 32.
² Or,
earnestly.

7 Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments: and let no flower of the spring pass by us:

8 let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered:

9 let none of us go without his part of our ³voluptuousness: let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place: for this is our portion, and our lot is this.

³ Or, jollity.

10 Let us oppress the poor righteous man, let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the ancient gray hairs of the aged.

11 Let our strength be the law of justice: for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth.

bringing gloom and discontent (2 Sam. xix. 35. Eccles. xi. 9.). Even the heathen poet said, “The mere pleasure-hunter is not a man, but “a live corpse; and the wealth of kings, without inward contentment, “is worthless as smoke” (Sophocles, *Antigone*).

7—9. “Let us take our fill of costly wine and ointments” (Amos vi. 6.); “let not the flower that scents the air be omitted from our “feasts. Let us make us garlands of rosebuds” (with the eager appetite for pleasure which seeks to anticipate enjoyment, plucking the bud instead of waiting for the full-blown flower), “that we may enjoy them “before they fade. Let us all share alike in the same boastful mirth” (or, “bragging,” 2 Macc. ix. 7. The word denotes wantonness and insolence, such as is described in Hos. xiii. 6. Jer. v. 7, 28. Deut. xxxii. 15.). “Let us leave signs of our festivity” (or “folly,” according to one of the Versions) “everywhere; for this is our lot and portion.” So, when the prodigal received his “portion,” he wasted it in riotous living (St. Luke xv. 11—13.). The Vulgate adds, “Let there be no field over “which our luxury passes not.” It has been observed that the use of garlands of roses was a Greek, rather than a Jewish, custom.

10. “Let us oppress the poor, and afflict the just; not sparing the “aged, nor respecting the venerable gray hairs of the elder.” For the effect of feasting and luxury is not only to produce boisterous mirth and insolence; sensuality first produces indifference to the sufferings of others, and then it inflames the darker passions, and makes men delight in inflicting pain. Such was the career of many of the Roman emperors. Roses and ointments are signs of softness and delicacy, but they are followed by thirst for blood; thus the rose has its thorn that wounds the flesh, as well as its fair bloom and sweet odour.

11. “Let our strength be the law of justice, for weakness and poverty “may be treated as a crime on account of its unprofitableness.” In the eyes of the wicked “might is right.” It was the maxim of the sophists, that the “expedient of the stronger” was the justice by which men were governed. It was also an error into which men would easily fall, when their judgments were blinded by the inordinate love of the world and

12 Therefore let us lie in wait for the righteous ; because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings : he upbraideth us with our offending the law, and objecteth to our infamy the transgressings of our education.

the flesh ; “to abuse their power in doing what pleased them for the “moment, if it was not presently perceived to be palpably wrong” (*Jackson*). Such men admire strength, and despise weakness ; and thus the heathen derided the Christians, as if they had been of a feeble and slavish temper, because their religion taught them to endure wrongs patiently (*Tertullian*).

12. “Let us lay a snare for the just man, for we can gain no advantage “from him ; his actions are contrary to ours, his goodness is the reproof “of our wickedness ; he also reproaches us for our offences against the “Divine law, and publishes abroad the errors of doctrine and practice “in which we have been trained.” These words are found in the Greek Version of Is. iii. 9, 10, “Woe unto their soul ! for they have rewarded “evil unto themselves, saying, Let us bind the righteous, for he is useless “to us ; therefore they shall eat the fruit of their doings.” The whole of this passage, especially vv. 12 to 20, has a remarkable application to Christ’s Passion, and to the conspiracy of the Jewish rulers against Him. The just One, in ver. 13, claims to be the child of God, and boasts that God is His Father. He accounts the wicked, in ver. 16, to be as “counterfeits,” or “base coin,” which is like the charge of hypocrisy against the Scribes and Pharisees. The words in ver. 17 are like the reproaches spoken against Christ on the cross ; and the “shameful death,” in ver. 20, describes the death by “crucifixion” which Christ suffered at the hands of the wicked (Heb. xii. 2.). Hence the passage was used by many Christian writers in the controversy with the Jews, and quoted together with the predictions of the Passion in the Psalms and Prophets. One of them connects it with the language of Plato in the *Republic*, where the just man is said to suffer scourging and impalement and other cruel usage ; and he considers the words of the heathen philosopher to be a near approach to a prophecy of Christ. The author of Wisdom probably had in his mind the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and other prophecies and types of the Old Testament. The enmity or opposition between good and evil had its beginning at the Fall of Man (Gen. i. 15.), and was manifested in all the persecutions which the righteous sustained at the hands of the ungodly ; as when Abel was slain by Cain, Joseph was conspired against by his brethren, or the prophets were imprisoned or put to death by the Jews and their rulers. This opposition between the seed of the serpent and the children of God reached its greatest height when the Son Himself was sent into the Lord’s vineyard. For then the husbandmen said, Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours (see St. Matt. xxi. 37—39. Acts vii. 51, 52.).

The ungodly begin by saying that the just One is “useless” to them. So, in Is. liii. 2, 3, it was foretold that the righteous Servant of the Lord should be despised and rejected by the Jews. He was in their eyes weak and unprofitable, a poor Galilean who sought no glory from men, instead of an earthly king and deliverer, such as they looked for. His

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, II.

13 He professeth to have the knowledge of God : and ^fhe calleth himself the child of the Lord.

^f Matt. 27. 43.
John 19. 7.
^g John 7. 7.
Eph. 5. 13.
^h Is. 53. 3.

14 He was made ^gto reprove our thoughts.

15 ^hHe is grievous unto us even to behold : for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion.

16 We are esteemed of him as ²counterfeits : he ²Or, false coin.
abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness : ⁱhe ⁱNum. 23. 19.
pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his father.

actions were good, and condemned their evil deeds (1 John iii. 12.). As Joseph accused his brethren (Gen. xxxvii. 2.), so Christ reproved their vainglory, their blindness to their own faults, and hasty censure of others. He also convicted them of erring from the truth, through the faults of their education, when He spoke of their frustrating the commandments of God by their corrupt traditions (St. Matt. xv. 3, 4.).

13. "He announces that He has by revelation the knowledge of God ; "He saith of Himself, 'I am the Son of God.'" So Christ declared that He alone had seen God and knew God (St. Matt. xi. 27. St. John vi. 45, 46.). For He was not only the "Servant of the Lord," but the "Son of the Father" (see St. Matt. xxvii. 43.).

14, 15. "The effect of His words is to rebuke our inward thoughts "and purposes" (so Christ knew what was in man, St. Mark xii. 15. St. John ii. 25.); "we cannot endure even the sight of Him, for His "manner of life is singular, and unlike other men ; His ways are "extraordinary, and separate from the multitude." The light of holiness reproveth the works of darkness, and provokes the envy of the wicked (St. John iii. 20.). So Elijah was grievous to Ahab even to behold (1 Kin. xviii. 17 ; xxi. 20.); and Herodias could not endure the very existence of St. John the Baptist. This envy also caused Socrates and other virtuous heathen to be hated by their fellow-citizens. They were "singular," refusing to conform to the vices of the society amongst which they lived, and this was imputed to them as a crime. Such was the singularity of Noah, Abraham, and Job, to whom this testimony was given, that "there was none like them in the earth" (Job i. 8. Eccus. xlv. 19.).

16. "We are as base metal or reprobate silver in His estimation" (see Is. i. 22. Jer. vi. 30.) "He avoids our ways as pollution ; He speaks "of the blessedness of the latter end of the just, and arrogantly vaunts "that God is His Father." Base metal is a type of the outward pretence of piety without the inward devotion of the heart ; such religion will not endure the test of temptation ; then it is weighed in the balances and found wanting (see Ps. lxii. 9.). Thus our Lord denounced the Pharisees as unclean within, though they were so scrupulous about outward washings ; and He said to His disciples, "Do not ye after their "works : for they say, and do not" (St. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3, 25—28.). In His Sermon on the Mount He declared who were truly happy and blessed ; not only those who like Job obtained earthly blessings in their latter end, but also the dead that die in the Lord (Job xlii. 12. Rev. xiv. 13.).

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, II.

17 Let us see if his words be true: and let us prove what shall happen in the end of him.

^k Ps. 22. 8, 9.
Matt. 27. 43.

18 For if the just man be the ^kson of God, he will help him, and deliver him from the hand of his enemies.

¹ Jer. 11. 19.

19 Let us ¹examine him with despitefulness and torture, that we may know his meekness, and prove his patience.

20 Let us condemn him with a shameful death: for by his own saying he shall be respected.

21 Such things they did imagine, and were deceived: for their own wickedness hath blinded them.

² (i.e. preferred, or, esteemed the reward.)

22 As for the mysteries of God, they knew them not: neither hoped they for the wages of righteousness, nor ²discerned a reward for blameless souls.

When He declared that God was His Father, they accused Him not only of arrogance, but of blasphemy (St. John v. 17—19.).

17, 18. "Let us prove the truth of His words by the event that befalls Him; for if the just man be the Son of God, He will help and deliver Him when He is attacked by His enemies." This may be taken from Ps. xxii. 7, 8. Such were the reproaches at the crucifixion, and the boast of the Jews after Christ's death and burial, that they had proved that Christ's words were not true (St. Matt. xxvii. 41, 42, 43, 63, 64.). In the same way Joseph's brethren said, "We shall see what will become of his dreams" (Gen. xxxvii. 19, 20.).

19, 20. "Let us torment Him with reproachful words and cruel deeds, and test to the utmost His meekness and long-suffering. Let us sit in judgment upon Him, and condemn Him to an ignominious death: thus there shall be an enquiry into the truth of His words." There is a reference here to the patience of the Man of Sorrows, as it was foretold by Isaiah under the type of the Lamb led to the slaughter, and silent before those who oppressed and afflicted Him (Is. liii. 7. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 21—23.). Christ's enemies also, when they had nailed Him to the cross of shame and agony, repeated His own words, "Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself!" For they supposed that they had proved that His words were false.

21, 22. "Thus they reasoned with themselves, and erred in their hearts, for their wickedness had blinded them; they had no knowledge of God's mysteries, or expectation of the reward of holiness. They discerned not the reward which was reserved for the blameless souls of the righteous." So the enemies of Christ erred and were blind (St. John ix. 40, 41); they knew not what they did (St. Luke xxiii. 34.). The Sadducees in particular erred, not knowing the truth, when they denied the hope of future rewards, and the resurrection of the dead. For these doctrines were a mystery, speaking of things hidden from the eye and ear of man, and revealed only to faith, which is the evidence of things not seen. See 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 9. Yet the history of Abel, and of the other righteous men who had died by the hands

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, III.

23 For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an ^mimage of his own eternity.

^m Gen. 1. 26,
27. & 5. 1.
Eccles. 17. 3.
ⁿ Gen. 3. 13.

24 ⁿ Nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it.

CHAPTER III.

1 The godly are happy in their death, 5 and in their troubles: 10 the wicked are not, nor their children: 13 but they that are pure are happy, though they have no children: 16 for the adulterer and his seed shall perish.

of the wicked, should have led them to apprehend the truth of the life to come. But the earthly minded could not discern this; and to the Jews, who set their hopes on temporal promises, Christ's death seemed to be without honour.

23. "For God created man for immortality, and made him in His own image, to be the likeness of the glory which is His own property." The history of the creation shows that immortality, or incorruption, was the reward of holy souls to which God purposed to bring man. Adam, if he had remained upright, would have attained to it. This Divine purpose is still unchanged, for it is His will that all men should be saved and attain to eternal life through the incarnation of His blessed Son (1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.). In coming to this perfection there was to be a gradual growth in grace, by which the souls of men were to increase in knowledge and holiness, until they attained the measure of perfect age, and became like their Maker in all those points in which it is possible for created beings to imitate God. See Eph. iv. 13.

24. "It was by the envy of the devil that death entered into the world, and when men become his portion, or subjects of his kingdom, they invite death, and make trial of his power to hurt them." Sin and death entered into the world by the transgression of Adam (Rom. v. 12.). But since he sinned at the suggestion of Satan, Satan is called the "slayer of man," or the "homicide" (St. John viii. 44.). As pride and impatience of authority was the cause of his rebellion against God, so envy at the happiness of our first parents in the garden of Eden was his motive in laying a snare for them. His special work is death; for he is the destroyer of God's work, the instigator of murder and bloodshed that slays the body, as well as of sin that slays the soul. The first murderer, Cain, was of that wicked one (1 John iii. 12.). The suggestions of evil thoughts are his fiery darts by which souls are wounded or slain (St. John xiii. 2. Eph. vi. 11, 16.). His name is "Sin," and his servants earn wages, and the wages which he gives is death (Rom. vi. 23.). This is what the soldiers who fight on his side will find. All sin is deadly; special sins brought their own plagues or modes of death, such as the Deluge, or the sulphurous storm that overwhelmed the cities of the plain. Yet the chief death which the followers of Satan find is the death of the soul, by its separation from God and the source of life. The fruit of his service is shame, and the end of it is death (Rom. vi. 21.).

CHAPTER III.

1. "But though the enemy seems to prevail against the righteous,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, III.

- ^a Dent. 33. 3. **B**UT ^athe souls of the righteous are in the hand
of God, and there shall no torment touch them.
- ^b ch. 5. 4. 2 ^b In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die :
and their departure is taken for misery,
3 and their going from us to be utter destruction :
but they are in peace.

“and to slay their bodies, their souls are safe in the hands of God, “in the care of the everlasting arms. Therefore death, which brings “torment to the wicked, cannot hurt them.” The ungodly can only hurt or kill the body, they have no power against the souls of the servants of God. The soul of Abel lived after death, and his voice was heard; the murderous deed of Cain was a deadly blow to his own soul, not to his brother’s. The belief in the life to come was strong, even before the clear revelation of it in the Gospel of Christ. It made the three Jewish princes yield their bodies to the fiery furnace; it made Daniel expose himself to the lions; it nerved the sufferers in the persecutions of Antiochus (2 Macc. vi. 30; vii. 9, 14.). Such were the saints, whose death was precious in the sight of the Lord (Ps. cxvi. 15.). When they died, they continued to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and beneath the shadow of the Almighty (Ps. xci. 1.). They were not out of remembrance, or cut away from His hand (Ps. lxxxviii. 5.), for God redeemed their souls from the power of hell, and received them (Ps. xlix. 15.). They entered into peace, and rested in their beds (Is. lvii. 1, 2.). Whilst they lived, even whilst their bodies seemed to be in the hands of the enemy, their souls were in the hands of God. For God said to Satan concerning Job, “Behold he,” (that is, his body,) “is in thine hand; but save his soul.” Satan was permitted to afflict him with sore diseases, but he might not deprive him of life, or of the use of reason, or of faith in God (Job ii. 6.). So, when the righteous suffer at the hands of the wicked, the torment only reaches their bodies; it cannot touch their souls, so as to harm them. To the carnal and worldly death has torment; it is to them the loss of all that they have lived for, a state of exile, poverty, and nakedness (Prov. xiv. 32.); but the righteous has hope in his death. The wicked may appear to die easily (Ps. lxxiii. 4.), and the righteous to be severed from this life by the sharpest pains and agony; but to these there is no torment but the momentary sufferings of the body, and even these are blessed; for when they are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, this is for God’s sake (Ps. xliv. 11. Rom. viii. 36.). They are accepted by Him “as a “burnt-offering” (below, ver. 6.), offered as a sacrifice to the Lord of life (see Phil. ii. 17.). Therefore they can boldly say, “The Lord “is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me” (Ps. lvi. 4. See also St. Luke xvi. 22; xx. 37, 38. Acts vii. 59, 60. Rev. xiv. 13; vi. 11.).

2, 3. “In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to die, and at their “departure their enemies esteemed them stricken and afflicted” (Is. liii. 4.), “as if their going from us was utter destruction, like the breaking “of a potter’s vessel” (Ps. xxxi. 12. Jer. xix. 11. Rev. ii. 27.); “but by “their death, however violent or cruel in appearance, they have entered “into peace.” This was said of Josiah, though he was slain in battle,

4 For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their ^chope full of immortality.

^c Rom. 8. 24.
2 Cor. 5. 1.
1 Pet. 1. 13.

5 And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly ²rewarded: for God ^dproved them, and found them ³worthy for himself.

² Or,
benefited.
^d Ex. 16. 4.
Deut. 8. 2.

6 ^eAs gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and received them as a burnt offering.

³ Or, meet.
^e Zech. 13. 9.
Mal. 3. 3.
Eccles. 2. 5.
^f Matt. 13. 43.

7 And in the time of their visitation ^fthey shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble.

see 2 Kin. xxii. 20; xxiii. 29. Is. lvii. 1, 2. Ps. xxxvii. 37. Death is here said to be an exodus, or departure, not a destruction. In the case of Abraham (Gen. xv. 2, 15.) it was a journey, a "going to his fathers in peace." In the case of the martyrs, who glorified God by their deaths, it was also a triumph (Rom. viii. 36, 37. Rev. xii. 11; xxi. 7.). The foolish or thoughtless beheld only their lives of jeopardy, their afflictions, their deaths of suffering; but faith perceived that this was their passage through death to life (1 Cor. xv. 19, 30, 31. 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.). Even in death they lived, and were "more than conquerors."

4. "In men's sight they are chastened with pain and death" (so the apostles were made a "spectacle" unto the world, 1 Cor. iv. 9.); "but their hope is a full assurance of immortality." It is a hope that maketh not ashamed; no mere dream or speculation, but an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, resting on the promises of Him who cannot lie (Heb. vi. 18—20.).

5, 6. "Their afflictions are light, and of short duration; the benefits which they shall obtain are great and glorious. They have been "tried and tempted" (Heb. xi. 37.), "and God has found them worthy of Himself" (having that worthiness which is the gift of God's sanctifying grace, making them accepted in the Beloved, Col. i. 10. 1 Thess. ii. 12. Eph. i. 6. Rev. iii. 4.). "As gold in the refiner's furnace He "has proved them, and as a whole burnt-offering of sacrifice He has "accepted them." The reward of the faithful is a "benefit" of God's free grace, a bounty far beyond any "wages" or "recompence" for their labours and sufferings. It is rather an abundant inheritance which they shall obtain (Syriac.). For the reward is not reckoned of debt, but of grace (Rom. iv. 4.). Their sufferings have been gain to them, for they are like the refiner's fire which purges the dross from the gold and silver, not only severing the just from the wicked (Ezek. xxii. 18—22.), but also purifying the souls of the saints from the sins and imperfections which were mingled with their faith and devotion. See Eccles. ii. 5. Job xxiii. 10. Is. xlvi. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. They are also accepted as a burnt-offering; for they have made the most complete and unreserved sacrifice of themselves to God, by giving their bodies to be slain for the testimony of the truth (Phil. ii. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 6.); and this sacrifice was salted with the fire of charity, without which it is of no profit (1 Cor. xiii. 3.).

7. "And in the time of their visitation" (when God shall appear to succour His servants, and to recompense vengeance to His enemies,

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, III.

^e Matt. 19. 28.
¹ Cor. 6. 2.

8 They ^e shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever.

² Or, and
such as be
faithful
shall remain
with him in
love.
^h ch. 4. 15.

9 They that put their trust in him shall understand the truth: ² and such as be faithful in love shall abide with him: ^h for grace and mercy is to his saints, and he hath care for his elect.

ⁱ Matt. 25. 41.

10 But the ⁱ ungodly shall be punished according to their own imaginations, which have neglected the righteous, and forsaken the Lord.

11 For whoso despiseth wisdom and nurture, he

Gen. i. 24, 25. Jer. vi. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 12.), "they shall shine with the light of truth and holiness; and when the fire of God's wrath shall consume the ungodly as stubble, they shall be as the sparks which fly upward" (Job v. 7.), "or like the torch of fire in the sheaf of corn" (Zech. xii. 6.), "witnesses to the justice of God and to the guilt of His enemies, who are the more deserving of punishment in that the good examples of the saints were exhibited to them in vain." See also Mal. iv. 1.

8. "Then dominion over the nations shall be given to the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 18, 22, 27.); "and they shall judge the people; for their Lord shall conquer all His enemies, and possess the kingdom for ever and ever." So in Ps. xlix. 14, there is the expectation of the morning, in which the upright should have the dominion; and this hope was confirmed by the promises of the Gospel, for Christ promised thrones to His Apostles, and it was announced in the Revelation of St. John that those who overcame should receive authority over the nations, and should rule them with a rod of iron (St. Matt. xix. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Rev. ii. 26, 27.). They should reign with Him and under Him, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Such was the glory to which the martyrs looked forward when they were awaiting their sentence. "The prison was dark, but they were themselves a shining light; they were bound with chains, but they were free to God; the smell of the dungeon was dismal, but they were an odour of a sweet smell to Him. They were awaiting the sentence of an earthly judge; but they should hereafter sit in judgment upon their judges" (*Tertullian*).

9. "Those who trust in God shall attain to wisdom and the understanding of the truth, if they are faithful and stedfast in His love; for the favour and mercy of God shall be shown to His elect" (and He will visit His saints with His salvation. This clause is omitted in some copies of the Greek). The mercy of God is shown especially to the merciful, who strive to imitate Him in His mercy. "With the merciful thou shalt be merciful" (Ps. xviii. 25. St. Matt. v. 7.).

10. "But wrath and rebuke shall come upon the ungodly for the evil which they have devised; because they disregarded righteousness, and have forsaken God." See Prov. i. 29—31.

11, 12. "He who despises wisdom is miserable: the hope of such men is vain; their labours are bestowed on things which cannot profit

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, III.

is miserable, and their hope is vain, their labours unfruitful, and their works unprofitable :

12 their wives are ² foolish, and their children ² Or, *light, or, unchaste.* wicked :

13 their offspring is cursed. Wherefore blessed is the barren that is undefiled, which hath not known the sinful bed : she ^k shall have fruit in the visita- ^k Is. 56. 5. tion of souls.

14 And *blessed is* the ¹ eunuch, which with his ¹ Is. 56. 4, 5. hands hath wrought no iniquity, nor imagined wicked things against God : for unto him shall be given ³ the special gift of faith, and an inheritance ⁴ in the ³ Gr. *the chosen.* temple of the Lord more acceptable to his mind. ⁴ Or, *among the people.*

15 For glorious is the fruit of good labours : and the root of wisdom shall never fall away.

“them, their wives are foolish, their children are a depraved and “accursed generation.” They are not only deprived of the glorious hope of immortality, but even in this world retribution overtakes them. Though they boast of the success of their labours, and glory in a numerous posterity, the wealth which they have laid up will not follow them when they die, and the children of whom they boast are a degenerate race, corrupted by their evil example. They have their portion in this life, and leave their substance for their babes (Ps. xvii. 14.). But the generations of the wicked, even when they seem to prosper, are heirs of a curse and not a blessing. See Eccclus. xvi. 1, 2. Job xxi. 7—9.

13, 14. “Far happier than the parents of such an offspring is the “woman that is pure and undefiled, even though she be desolate and “childless ; for in the day of visitation it shall be found that her “virtues have borne fruit in the souls that have been guided by her “word or example in the way of righteousness ; and the eunuch who “has abstained from evil in deed and thought shall obtain a choice “reward of his faith, and an acceptable portion in the Lord’s Temple.” Such was the Divine message by the prophet Isaiah to the eunuchs who kept God’s sabbaths and observed His covenant (Is. lvi. 3, 4, 5.). He took away the reproach which the law of Moses laid upon them by separating them from the congregation. He gave them a “place “in His house,” and “an everlasting name,” that should not be cut off. They were degraded in the world, but not in the sight of God, for they obtained the grace or reward of faith, by which the just shall live (Hab. ii. 4.). They obtained a better name and portion than that of sons and daughters, to keep them in remembrance (2 Sam. xviii. 18.). Such was the portion given to Daniel when he was a forlorn captive in Babylon, because his “hands had wrought no iniquity” (Dan. vi. 22 ; xii. 13.).

15. “For the name that is truly illustrious, and worthy of remem- “brance, is that which is gained by good works ; and wisdom is a root “of firmness and constancy which withstands the assaults of trial, and “cannot be overthrown.” See Ps. cxii. 6, 7 ; cxxviii. 1, 2. Is. iii. 10.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, IV.

16 As for the children of adulterers, they shall not ²come to their perfection, and the seed of an ²Or, be partakers of holy things. unrighteous bed shall be rooted out.

17 For though they live long, yet shall they be nothing regarded: and their last age shall be without honour.

18 Or, if they die quickly, they have no hope, ³Or, hearing. neither comfort in the day of ³trial.

19 For horrible is the end of the unrighteous generation.

CHAPTER IV.

¹ The chaste man shall be crowned. ³ Bastard slips shall not thrive. ⁶ They shall witness against their parents. ⁷ The just die young, and are happy. ¹⁹ The miserable end of the wicked.

BBETTER it is to have no children, and to have virtue: for the memorial thereof is immortal: because it is ⁴known with God, and with men. ⁴Or, approved.

16, 17, 18. "But the degenerate issue of the wicked are like the "bastard seed of adulterers who are born of fornication; they shall *not come to perfection, but shall perish by an untimely end: or "should their days be prolonged, they will be despised as worthless, "and their old age will be without honour: or if they die early, they "have no hope nor comfort in the day of trial. Thus in every case "the end of the wicked generation is miserable." By the Law of Moses, in Deut. xxiii., the base-born, or the children of whoredoms and forbidden connections, were excluded from the Lord's congregation. This was a political precept, and not of perpetual obligation; for children, however born, have their being from God, and are capable of spiritual as well as physical growth. The degenerate issue of the wicked are here contemplated as cursed and blighted, because they are imitators of their parents' impurity and other sins. Some, like Cain, prolong their lives, only to multiply their days of fear and remorse; others are cut off by premature deaths, and become an example of the Divine vengeance to others (Ps. lxxiii. 17—20.). To all, sooner or later, there will come the day of trial which reveals what they are, and discerns between the righteous and the wicked (Mal. iii. 18.).

CHAPTER IV.

1. "Far better is the condition of the childless, if they are virtuous; "for the memory of virtue endures to immortality, and it is known "and approved by God and men." The worldly and carnal seek for the immortality of fame, or for the continuance of their name and memory in their posterity; but virtue has a better memorial, the praise and approval of God and men; and the hope of the righteous is fixed, not upon earthly heirs and successors, but upon the heavenly state, in which there is no marrying nor giving in marriage (St. Luke xx. 34—36.).

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, IV.

2 When it is present, men take example at it ; and when it is gone, they desire it : ^a it weareth a crown, and triumpheth for ever, having gotten the victory, striving for undefiled rewards.

^a ch. 5. 16.
James 1. 12.
1 Pet. 5. 4.
Rev. 2. 10.

3 But the multiplying brood of the ungodly shall not thrive, nor take deep rooting from bastard slips, nor lay any fast foundation.

4 For though they flourish in branches for a time ; ^b yet standing not fast, they shall be shaken with the wind, and through the force of winds they shall be rooted out.

^b Matt. 7. 19.

5 The ^c imperfect branches shall be broken off, their fruit unprofitable, not ripe to eat, yea, meet for nothing.

^c ch. 3. 16.

6 For children begotten of unlawful ² beds are witnesses of wickedness against their parents in their trial.

² Gr. *sleeps*.

2. "Men admire and imitate the virtuous whilst they live, and mourn for them when they are gone ; and even in the present world virtue is like the victor in the athletic contests of the stadium, being conducted in triumph, wearing the garland or crown of victory, the prize of the undefiled contests." The figure is taken from the heathen games, in which the successful athletes received a crown, and were proclaimed as victors by the herald. So St. Paul uses the same example, as a lesson of temperance, or of striving for the mastery over sin (1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.). The praise which virtue obtains from men's approbation is like the corruptible or fading crown ; but reward of the "praise of God" in the last great day is the "incorruptible" crown, the inheritance undefiled (1 Pet. i. 4.). Some ancient writers used this passage to recommend the monastic or contemplative life, comparing the "undefiled contests" with the honour ascribed, in Rev. xiv. 4, 5, to the virgin followers of the Lamb. Such a life was afterwards led by the Jewish sect of the Therapeutæ in Egypt. But the purpose of the author of Wisdom here, is rather the consolation of the childless than the recommendation of the single life.

3—6. "But the numerous offspring of the wicked shall not profit them ; their children are degenerate ; they are like the slips which gardeners detach from the parent stock, and plant in the ground, which fail to take root, and are easily plucked up, having no secure basis to rest upon. For, even if they flourish and yield branches for a time, they are so insecure in their places, that they are first shaken by the wind, and then rooted up by the violence of the tempest. Their boughs are broken off before they come to perfection ; their fruit is unripe, and unfit for food, or for any other purpose. For the children of the wicked are a disgrace to their parents, like the base-born, the children of whoredoms, who are witnesses of their parents' sin when they are examined before the judges." The increase

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, IV.

7 But though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest.

8 For honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years.

9 But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.

of mankind is in itself the effect of the Divine blessing (Gen. i. 28.), but wickedness turns it into a curse; and when men began to multiply upon the earth, this increase led to the fearful judgment of the Deluge (Gen. vi. 1, 5. Eccus. xvi. 1, 2, &c.). The condition of the evil generation is here compared to gardeners' slips, on account of their insecurity; the brief continuance of their prosperity being contrasted with the endurance of God's saints (see Ps. xxxvii. 27, 28, 29, 35, 36. Job v. 3, 4. Jer. xii. 1, 2.). The curse comes upon them suddenly, when they are not aware; they perish like the blighted trunk by a premature decay, like the tree which our Lord cursed. Thus the ungodly shall not live out half their days, for whether death overtakes them earlier or later, they are not prepared for it (Job xxii. 15, 16.). As in the case of the illegitimate, so in that of "sinners' children" generally, the parents are involved in disgrace by their offspring. "The children will complain of an ungodly father, because they shall be reproached for his sake" (Eccus. xli. 7.). The child of a guilty parent often inherits his vicious propensities. The poet says that "Heaven is just, and of our pleasant vices makes instruments to plague us." In the trial or inquisition of the adulteress, she is brought out into the congregation, and her children are the evidence of her guilt (see Eccus. xxiii. 24, 25.). It may therefore have been in mercy that God removed the child that was the fruit of David's adulterous union with Bath-sheba, and David himself acknowledged this (2 Sam. xii. 22, 23.).

7—9. "But the righteous, even though he dies early, shall be at rest" (ch. iii. 3.). "The age which is worthy of honour is not the prolonged life, measured by the number of years, but the gray hairs of wisdom, and the maturity of an unblemished conduct." The good man, when he seems to die before his time (Eccus. vii. 17.), is ripe for his latter end. When he dies, his flesh shall rest in hope, and his soul shall enter into peace (Ps. xvi. 9. Is. lvii. 2.). As the old age of the wicked is neither wise nor honourable, so there have been many to whom God has given wisdom in youth or childhood, as Samuel, Solomon, Daniel, and others. Yet God's law enjoined that reverence for old age which nature itself teaches (Lev. xix. 32. Prov. xx. 29.). "Wisdom, for its own sake, is to be revered as much in the young as in those who are well stricken in years." Of such, it is rightly said that their ripeness of understanding is gray hair, and their virtues "old age." But because wisdom and youth are seldom joined, we rather follow Job's advice to "seek wisdom among the ancients" (Job xii. 12.)

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, IV.

10 ^d He pleased God, and was beloved of him : so ^{d Gen. 5. 24.}
that living among sinners he was translated. ^{Heb. 11. 5.}
^{See Is. 57. 1.}

11 Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul.

12 For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest ; and the wandering of concupiscence doth ² undermine the simple mind.

13 He, being made ³ perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time :

14 for his soul pleased the Lord : therefore hastened he *to take him away* from among the wicked.

² Gr.
pervert.
³ Or, sanctified, or, consummated,
Heb. 12. 23.

10—14. "Because he walked with God, and pleased Him, he was "beloved. Like Enoch, he was translated and lived to God, when he "no longer lived amongst sinners" (Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5.). "He "was suddenly caught away from the world, before it corrupted his "mind by its wickedness, or ensnared him by its deceit. For virtue is "shaken from its stedfastness when it is exposed to envy and detraction, "by which vice seeks to disparage its goodness and dim its lustre ; and "the mind that was once simple and honest is often led astray by the "roving of the desires, and is altered in its fashion like the metal in "the hands of the craftsman. The just man, when he was brought to "perfection, and was removed at an early age, in a short time fulfilled a long time. His soul was pleasing to the Lord, and he "hastened from the midst of the wicked in obedience to the summons "of God, who called him to leave the sin and misery of the world." This passage may be regarded as a paraphrase upon the words in Is. lvii. 1, "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come," or "from the presence of iniquity" (LXX). Such was the translation of Enoch, whose removal was a happy change to him, but a judgment upon the world that was unworthy of him (Ecclus. xlv. 16.). Such also was the death of Josiah, who was taken away that he might not see all the calamities that were coming upon his people (2 Kin. xxii. 20.). The evil from which the righteous is taken away is the evil of sin and temptation, as well as the calamities which sin brings with it. God knows both the weakness of His servants, and the strength of temptation. According to this foreknowledge He ordains life or death for them. To some He imparts grace, to keep them from falling (Jude 24.) ; to others, after they have fallen, He gives the power to rise up by true repentance. In other cases He shortens the time of their probation, and removes them from an evil world, foreseeing that the temptation will prove too strong for them. In the trials of the last days even the faith of the elect shall be in danger (St. Matt. xxiv. 22, 24.). One of the great trials to constancy is in the envious temper of the wicked, who having no virtue in themselves disparage it to the utmost in others. So they impute unworthy motives, as when Satan said, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" Another trial is from the wandering of concupiscence, the restless curiosity of man's nature, by which the simplicity of childhood is corrupted, as more

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, IV.

^e ch. 3. 9. 15 This the people saw, and understood it not, neither laid they up this in their minds, ^e That his grace and mercy is with his saints, and that he hath respect unto his chosen.

^f Matt. 12. 41, 42. 16 Thus the righteous that is dead shall ^f condemn the ungodly which are living; and youth that is soon perfected the many years and old age of the unrighteous.

17 For they shall see the end of the wise, and shall not understand what God in his counsel hath decreed of him, and to what end the Lord hath set him in safety.

18 They shall see him, and despise him; but God shall laugh them to scorn: and they shall hereafter be a vile carcase, and a reproach among the dead for evermore.

19 For he shall rend them, and cast them down headlong, that they shall be speechless; and he shall shake them from the foundation; and they shall be utterly laid waste, and be in sorrow; and their memorial shall perish.

^g Or, to the casting up of the account.

20 And ² when they cast up the accounts of their

knowledge of the world is acquired. See St. Mark iv. 18, 19. Some are also ripened by God's grace for the future life sooner than others. In a short time they are enabled to fulfil what others do in a longer time, and to attain that ripeness for eternity which God's counsels of predestination require them to reach. Thus, men are said to be "perfected" through faith, patience, and perseverance, in Heb. ii. 10; xi. 40; xii. 23. The parable of the vineyard also shows that in the kingdom of heaven many that are last shall be first, and they who are called at the eleventh hour shall receive the same recompence as they who have borne the burden and heat of the day (St. Matt. xix. 30.).

15. "But the ungodly people, when they saw the righteous perish, "laid it not to heart" (Is. lvii. 1.), "nor perceived that God's favour "and mercy is shown to His elect, and that He will visit His saints "with salvation." This mercy is shown sometimes in an early death, as in the case of Jeroboam's child (1 Kin. xiv. 12, 13.).

16, 17. "Thus the righteous man who is dead will condemn the "wicked who are yet alive, and the youth that is soon perfected will "be the reproof of the old age of the ungodly, and of the many years "that they have wasted and misspent. For they shall see the end "of the wise without perceiving God's purpose concerning him, to "keep him from falling whilst he lived, and to receive his soul in "death." See Ps. lxxiii. 24.

18—20. "The wicked shall see the end of the just, and shall de-

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, V.

sins, they shall come with fear: and their own iniquities shall convince them to their face.

CHAPTER V.

1 The wicked shall wonder at the godly, 4 and confess their error, 5 and the vanity of their lives. 15 God will reward the just, 17 and war against the wicked.

THEN shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours.

2 When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for.

“spise him;” judging amiss, like the friends of Job, and not perceiving that the calamities which befall the righteous are appointed for their good (Job xii. 4, 5.). “But the Lord shall make them objects of “derision” (Ps. ii. 4; xxxvii. 13.). “They shall be involved in a “disgraceful ruin” (the word is translated “carcase,” but it also means “fall,” or “destruction,” as in Eccus. xxxi. 6; xxxiv. 16.). “Their “portion among the dead shall be shame and everlasting contempt, “for none of their worldly pomp shall follow them to the grave (Ps. xlix. 14, 17.). “They shall be speechless before God, with no plea to “urge in excuse for their guilt” (Gen. xlv. 3. St. Matt. xxii. 12.). “He “shall rend them, severing their souls from their bodies by a sudden “or violent death” (like the tyrant Antiochus, in 1 Macc. vi. 8—13; or Herod, in Acts xii. 23.). “They shall be thrown prostrate, shaken “from the foundations” (so in Ps. lxxiii. 18, the ungodly are set in slippery places; the ground on which they rest gives way; they find that they have relied on that which could not profit them, Job viii. 14; xv. 31.); “the place which they occupied shall be utterly laid “waste, they shall perish miserably, and be no more remembered” (Ps. ix. 6.). “In the day of account, when they shall ‘take the sum’ of “their sins, they shall go forth in terror, for they shall be faced by “their own iniquities as their accusers, and their guilt shall be exposed to the light.” For God will convict the wicked, by setting before them the things which they have done (Ps. i. 21. Jer. ii. 19.).

CHAPTER V.

1. “Then” (in the “time of visitation,” iii. 7, or of “the revelation of God’s righteous judgment,” Rom. ii. 5.) “the just man shall “stand with much confidence and assurance of God’s favour in the “sight of his enemies and persecutors, who scorned and despised his “sufferings.” He shall stand with boldness, because he was bold in this world to confess the truth of God, and to suffer for it (St. Luke xii. 8, 9. 1 John iv. 17.). The wicked shall be confounded when they see the joy into which he has entered, and from which they are themselves excluded (St. Luke xiii. 28; xvi. 23.).

2. “At the sight of the just man they shall be troubled and terri-

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, V.

3 And they repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit shall say within themselves, This was he, whom we had sometimes in derision, and a ² proverb of reproach :

² Or,
parable.

^a ch. 3. 2.

4 ^a we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour :

5 how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints !

6 Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us.

"fied ; they shall be struck with amazement at the new wonder of his "salvation." They shall be filled with shame and remorse, and be troubled, like Joseph's brethren, at his presence (Gen. xlv. 3.). So Christ shall be seen by those who pierced Him, and the tribes of the earth shall mourn at His coming (St. Matt. xxiv. 30.). The triumph of Him whom they despised shall be to them a new wonder, a strange "paradox," such as men will not believe, though it be told them (Hab. i. 5.). See also Is. lxxv. 13, 14.

3. "They shall repent of their folly, and groan in their distress "of mind, saying to themselves, This was the man who was regarded by "us with derision and as a bye-word of contempt." The repentance of the wicked is not the "sorrow according unto God," but the vexation at the consequences of their sin, like the grief of Esau or Judas, or of the tyrant Antiochus in 2 Macc. ix. 11. It shall be the distress of those on whom the day of vengeance shall come as a thief, involving them in a ruin that is inevitable. On the "proverb," or "bye-word," see 2 Chr. vii. 20. Ps. xlv. 14 ; lxxix. 11. Ezek. xvi. 44.

4, 5. "It seemed to us in our folly, that his life was strange and "singular, like that of a madman" (so the world reproached Christ and His disciples, St. Mark iii. 21. St. John vii. 20 ; viii. 48, 52 ; x. 20. Acts xxvi. 24. 1 Cor. iv. 10 ; because their ways were unlike those of other men, Wisd. ii. 15.) ; "and we reckoned his death to be a shameful "one" (Wisd. ii. 20 ; iii. 2, 3.) ; "but now to our astonishment he is "numbered amongst the sons of God, and his inheritance is with the "saints." See 1 Sam. ii. 9. Col. i. 12. In this world God's saints appear to be fools and madmen ; but in the day of judgment the scoffers shall say, "We were the madmen !" Then folly shall confess its error, with an evil and tardy repentance ; but wisdom shall be justified of all her children. The reward of the righteous is to be accepted as one of the "sons of the living God" (Hos. i. 10.), and to be advanced to the condition of the angels (Job xxxviii. 7.).

6. "We now perceive our error, that we wandered from the way of "truth, and our eyes were closed to the light of righteousness, and our "wilful ignorance was as a darkness, upon which the sun has not risen." The cause of this blindness is sin, which perverts the judgment, and obscures the soul's insight into the truth. See Prov. xiv. 12 ; xxi. 16. Is. xxvi. 11. It is because of men's evil and shameful deeds, that darkness is preferred to light (St. John iii. 19, 20.).

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, V.

7 We ² wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction: yea, we have gone through deserts, where there lay no way: but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it.

² Or, *filled ourselves, or, surfeited.*

8 What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with *our* vaunting brought us?

9 All those things are ^b passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by;

^b 1 Chr. 29. 15. ch. 2. 5.

10 and ^c as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves;

^c Prov. 30. 19.

11 ^d or as when a bird ³ hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way to be found, but the light air being beaten with the stroke of her wings, and parted with the violent noise and motion of them, is passed through, and therein afterwards no sign where she went is to be found;

^d Prov. 30. 19.

³ Or, *flieeth.*

12 or like as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it

7. "We indulged ourselves to the full in the paths of iniquity and "ruin:" men are soon sated by the enjoyments of sin, and feel they have had enough of them (see Is. lvii. 10. Ezek. xlv. 6.); they are paths of wasting and destruction (Is. lix. 7, 8.); "we travelled through "pathless deserts, and the way of the Lord was hidden from us." The ways of sin are crooked paths, like the tracks of the wild animals of the desert, with no rule of guidance but the wandering of the desire, no definite aim. They are compared to the roving of the wild ass or dromedary (Jer. ii. 23, 24.); or to the straying of the lost sheep in the cloudy and dark day (Ezek. xxxiv. 6, 12.). "The ways of sin are crooked, rocky, and uneven; broad indeed, but neither smooth nor safe; "but the ways of virtue are strait, but not crooked; narrow but not "unpleasant" (Prov. iii. 17.).

8, 9. "Our arrogance was of no profit to us; our pride of wealth "gained us no advantage; they passed away like a shadow, or as the "hasty passage of a courier." The wealthy boast that "money answereth "all things" (Eccles. x. 19.); the men of Babylon and Tyre vainly imagined that their pomp and splendour would endure for ever (Is. xlvii. 7. Ezek. xxviii. 2, 5.); but death overtakes them, and their hands are empty, their riches profit them not (Ps. lxxvi. 5. Eccles. v. 15.). The figure of the courier is taken from Job ix. 25, 26.

10—12. "As a ship traversing the surging tide leaves no track or "furrow made by the keel in the waves; as the bird flying through the "air, divides the breeze and makes a momentary noise and disturbance "by the beating of its wings, but is followed by rest and silence, so that "no trace of its flight can be found; or as the arrow shot at a mark "divides the air, but the air immediately returns to itself, so that the "path of the missile cannot be known;" so shall earthly pomp pass

parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know where it went through :

13 even so we in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end, and had no sign of virtue to shew ; but were consumed in our own wickedness.

^e Job 8. 14.

² Gr. *thistle-*
down.

³ Or, *chaff.*

^f Ps. 1. 4.

& 103. 16.

Prov. 10. 25.

& 11. 7.

James 1. 10, 11.

^g Gen. 15. 1.

Rev. 22. 12.

⁴ Or, *palace :*

unless the

word be

taken im-

properly, as

2 Macc. 2. 17.

^h ch. 4. 2.

2 Tim. 4. 8.

Rev. 4. 4.

& 9. 7.

14 ^e For the hope of the ungodly is like ² dust that is blown away with the wind ; like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm ; like as the smoke which is ^f dispersed here and there with a tempest, and passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day.

15 But the righteous live for evermore ; ^g their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the most High.

16 Therefore shall they receive a glorious ⁴ kingdom, and ^h a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand :

away and be forgotten, and the place thereof shall know it no more (Job xx. 4, 5, 8, 9. Ps. ciii. 15, 16. 1 John ii. 17.).

13. " So we, when we were born, wasted our days in vanity, and left " no memorial of virtue behind us ; but our life was consumed in " wickedness." Such is the life that is wasted in labours that yield no fruit to God (Ps. lxxviii. 33.). The monuments which the wicked leave behind them to perpetuate their fame, are no memorials of virtue, but rather of vainglory and selfishness. Such was the wealth which the tyrant Herod spent upon the Temple at Jerusalem.

14. [" Such things as these the sinners said in hell." This addition in the Vulgate was perhaps suggested by St. Luke xvi. 23.]

" For the hope of the ungodly man is like the fine bloom of the plant " that floats on the breeze, or like the thin hoar frost that is dissolved " and driven away by the gust of wind, or like the smoke that is dis- " persed in the air ; for it is gone like the memory of a wayfarer who tarries " for a night." See Jer. xiv. 8, where the wayfarer is the mere stran- ger, who is indifferent to the welfare of the country in which he sojourns ; who leaves and forgets it, and is himself forgotten. The other metaphors are taken from Ps. i. 4 ; xviii. 42 ; xxxvii. 20 ; lxxviii. 2. See also xvi. 29.

15. " But just men, although that which is mortal in them perishes, " live for ever ; their reward is safe in the Lord, and their sure trust " is in the Most High, who cares for them." Thus Abraham trusted that God would be his reward, though he died a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth ; and Moses endured, as seeing the invisible One (Gen. xv. 1. Heb. xi. 26, 27.). Death, which destroys the hope of the wicked, cannot exclude the just from the care of the Most High (Prov. xi. 7 ; xiv. 32.).

16. " Therefore, because of God's care for them, they shall obtain a " kingdom of honour and glory, and a diadem of beauty from His

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, V.

for with his right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he protect them.

17 ¹He shall take to him his jealousy for complete ^{1 Is. 59. 16, 17.} armour, and make the creature his weapon for the revenge of *his* enemies.

18 He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgment instead of an helmet.

19 He shall take ²holiness for an invincible ^{2 Or, equity.} shield.

20 His severe wrath shall he sharpen for a sword, and the world shall fight with him against the unwise.

21 Then shall the right aiming thunderbolts go

“hand; and with His own right hand and with His holy arm He “shall shield and protect them.” In 2 Esdr. ii. 45, the saints are said to be clothed in white, and crowned by the Son of God: “These be “they that have put off the mortal clothing, and have put on the “immortal, and have confessed the Name of God: now are they “crowned, and receive palms.” “The diadem of beauty” is mentioned in Is. xxviii. 5; lxii. 3. It is the emblem of royalty and priesthood (Exod. xxxix. 30, 31.); or, the “crown of good works” (Syriac), graciously accepted and plentifully rewarded by God. He will be a refuge and a hidingplace to His saints, and underneath are the everlasting arms (Deut. xxxiii. 27; Ps. v. 12.).

17. “He shall put on His whole armour for the battle, being clad “with jealousy as with a cloak” (Is. lix. 17, 18.). “He shall employ “the powers of nature which He has created, and make a way for “vengeance against His enemies.” The jealousy of God is His zeal for His people and for their deliverance (Zech. i. 14.). So when He plagued Egypt He “made a way” for His indignation (Ps. lxxviii. 50.); and He did this by making the elements of nature, the fire and hail and noisome beasts, fight with Him against the oppressors of His people. This idea is expanded at some length in the latter part of the book (see xvi. 24, 25; xix. 6.).

18, 19. “As a warrior repels the assaults of his enemies by the use “of a breastplate, helmet, and shield, so God will be invincible to “His adversaries through the righteousness of His laws, the unfeigned “truth of His judgments, and the holiness or mercy with which He “tempers His severity.” This armour renders Him proof against any charge of partiality or respect of persons, and the justice of His sentence shall be evident to all (Ps. xvii. 1, 2; lxii. 12.).

20. “The sword which He shall sharpen to slay His enemies shall “be the severity of His wrath, and the hosts of heaven and earth “shall be His allies in His warfare against the foolish.” The word which proceeds out of His mouth is like a sharp sword, executing His wrath (Is. xlix. 2.); and the angels in heaven, and the powers of nature, are the ministers of His just displeasure. See Judg. v. 20. Ecclus. xxxix. 28, 29, 30.

21. “His arrows are the lightnings, which go forth with unerring

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, VI.

abroad ; and from the clouds, as from a well drawn bow, shall they fly to the mark.

22 And hailstones full of wrath shall be cast *as* out of a stone bow, and the water of the sea shall rage against them, and the floods shall cruelly drown them.

23 Yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them, and like a storm shall blow them away : thus iniquity shall lay waste the whole earth, and ill dealing shall overthrow the thrones of the mighty.

CHAPTER VI.

1 Kings must give ear. 3 They have their power from God, 5 who will not spare them. 12 Wisdom is soon found. 21 Princes must seek for it : 24 for a wise prince is the stay of his people.

^a Ps. 2. 10.

^a **H**EAR therefore, O ye kings, and understand ; learn, ye that be judges of the ends of the earth.

2 Give ear, ye that rule the people, and glory in the multitude of nations.

"aim, reaching their mark from the clouds as from a well-bent bow." Lightnings are often called God's arrows (Ps xviii. 14 ; cxliv. 6.). God's arrows are also the sudden visitations of His wrath (Ps. vi. 2.). Such was the storm of fire and hail in Egypt. The bow from which these arrows are shot is in the cloud ; a sign of wrath to the wicked, and of mercy to the penitent (Gen. ix. 13.).

22. "And from His wrath, as from a sling, hailstones shall be cast "in full measure, the sea waves shall be furious against them, and "the rivers shall overflow them, so as to cut off all hope of escape." Such were the powers which God used when He made a way for his vengeance against the Egyptians: hailstones in Egypt ; the strength of the tide by the Red Sea (Exod. xiv. 27. See also Ezek. xiii. 13. Eccles. xlvi. 5, 6.).

23. "The blast of His power shall resist them, and shall winnow "them like a tempest. Their whole land shall be devastated by their "iniquity, and the thrones of their rulers shall be overturned by their "evil doings." See Is. lxvi. 15. Jer. xxiii. 19. The wrath of God is the winnowing-fan of the judge, dispersing the chaff of wickedness as with a whirlwind. The reference seems to be again to Egypt, as devastated by the plagues for the guilt of its rulers.

CHAPTER VI.

1. [The Vulgate adds: "Better is wisdom than strength, and the prudent man than the mighty." See Eccles. ix. 16, 18.] "The knowledge of these truths, concerning God's favour to the just, and His wrath against the wicked, is most needful for those who have rule over other men ; therefore hear and consider, O kings and judges throughout the world !" (See above, i. 1.)

2, 3. "If ye glory in your preeminence, or boast of the multitude

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, VI.

3 For ^bpower is given you of the Lord, and ^{b Rom. 13.} sovereignty from the Highest, who shall try your ^{1, 2.} works, and search out your counsels.

4 Because, being ministers of his kingdom, ye have not judged aright, nor kept the law, nor walked after the counsel of God ;

5 horribly and speedily shall he come upon you : for a sharp judgment shall be to them that be in high places.

6 For ^cmercy will soon pardon the meanest : but ^{c Luke 12.} mighty men shall be mightily tormented. ^{47, 48.}

"of your subjects, remember that you have your power and do-
"minion from the King of kings, the Lord most High, and that your
"works and purposes are subject to His judgment and scrutiny." To
boast in the multitude was the snare of David, when he numbered
the people (1 Chr. xxi. 1.). To the wise ruler it is but a burden :
"Who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?" (1 Kin. iii. 9.
See also Eccles. xxxii. 1.). It is by God's permission or appointment
that the kings of the earth reign ; and those who bear the sword of
justice hold it as God's representatives, for He says, "Vengeance is
"mine" (see 2 Chr. xix. 6. Prov. viii. 15. Eccles. x. 4.). Even those
who use their power amiss, and are unjust oppressive rulers, have
power given them from above (St. John xix. 11.). This does but increase
their guilt, and their peril of God's vengeance (Eccles. v. 8.).

4, 5. "Since ye who are subordinates in His kingdom have per-
"verted your judgments and transgressed His law, and have acted
"in opposition to His will, He will terribly and suddenly come upon
"you ; for a severe punishment awaits those who are in authority."
The punishment of rulers is sudden and severe ; since their evil
deeds are a greater guilt in God's sight, and a worse injury to men
than the sins of those beneath them. See St. Luke xii. 48. Mal. ii.
7, 8. Thus, in Lev. iv. 3, the sin of the anointed priest could only
be expiated by the sacrifice which was required for the sin of the
whole congregation. Aaron, in the matter of the golden calf, not only
sinned, but caused the people to sin ; therefore he was sentenced to
die in Mount Hor (Num. xx. 24 ; xxvii. 12—14.). When Israel joined
themselves to Baal-peor, the heads or princes were condemned to
death (Num. xxv. 4.). The teachers and guides of others must look
for a severer judgment, a "greater condemnation" (James iii. 1.). When
they are perverted, the salt loses its savour, and becomes worthless
and contemptible (St. Matt. v. 13.).

6. "The offence of the meanest is a venial one, for his ignorance,
"weakness, or poverty, is a claim for mercy ; but the mighty shall
"undergo a stricter trial and investigation." Thus, though the offences
of the poor may be heavily visited by human laws, their guilt is less
in God's sight than that of their superiors ; they are already chastened
in this world, and receive for their evil deeds in the present life : if
they defraud others, they have often the excuse of hard necessity (Prov.
vi. 30 ; xxx. 9.). Also, when great public calamities overtake a nation

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, VI.

7 For he which is Lord over all shall fear no
^d man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any
 man's greatness: for he hath made the small and
 great, and careth for all alike.

8 But a sore trial shall come upon the mighty.

9 Unto you therefore, O kings, do I speak, that
 ye may learn wisdom, and not fall away.

10 For they that keep holiness holily shall be
² judged holy: and they that have learned such
 things shall find ³ what to answer.

11 Wherefore set your affection upon my words;
 desire them, and ye shall be instructed.

12 Wisdom is glorious, and never fadeth away:
 yea, ^e she is easily seen of them that love her, and
 found of such as seek her.

it is the great and wealthy who suffer, the poor are left alone: "The
 "lambs feed after their manner, whilst the goods of the fat ones are
 "consumed" (Is. iii. 14; v. 17.). The severest threatenings of the
 prophets were addressed to the shepherds and rulers of the people of
 Israel and Judah (Is. i. 10.), the "ancients of His people" (Ps. cvii.
 39—41.).

7, 8. "For the Lord of all is no respecter of persons, that He should
 "draw back from judgment; nor will He regard earthly rank: He
 "made the small and the great, and His Providence is over all
 "alike; therefore a strict enquiry awaits the powerful." Thus He
 says, "Who is that shepherd that will stand before me?" (Jer. xlix.
 19.). The mighty may evade human judgments, but this does but
 expose them the more to the judgment of God. All souls are His,
 and all shall be judged alike by the laws of eternal equity, whether
 Jews or Gentiles, rulers or subjects, bond or free (Ezek. xviii. 4. Acts
 x. 34, 35. Rom. ii. 9, 10.).

9, 10. "My words are therefore of especial concern to tyrants, that
 "they may learn wisdom and not stumble; for those only who observe
 "piety with a pious intention shall be justified, and those that have been
 "taught to do this, shall find a plea to urge in their defence." "It
 "is not enough that a thing be in its own nature honest and just,
 "unless it be also honestly and justly done; we must keep holiness
 "holily, or else we shall spoil a good action, or allow an evil one"
 (Rom. iii. 8.). Though in the sight of God no flesh shall be justified,
 yet those who walk uprightly have an answer to their human accusers,
 like that of Job, when his integrity was unjustly challenged (Job
 xxvii. 5, 6.).

11. "If then you love my words and take delight in them, ye shall
 "be instructed." "So God requires us to give Him all the powers
 "and faculties of our souls, even the utmost which our unfeigned
 "affection towards Him can yield," Ps. xix. 9, 10. (*Hooker.*)

12, 13. "Bright and unfading is the beauty of Wisdom; she is
 "conspicuous to all who love her, and easily found by those who seek

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, VI.

13 She preventeth them that desire her, in making herself first known unto them.

14 Whoso seeketh her early shall have no great travail : for he shall find her sitting at his doors.

15 To think therefore upon her is perfection of wisdom : and whoso watcheth for her shall quickly be without care.

16 For she goeth about seeking such as are worthy of her, sheweth herself favourably unto them in the ways, and meeteth them in every thought.

her ; nay, she is known to those who are desirous of her even before "they make enquiry for her." In Job xxviii. 12, 13, &c., wisdom is said to be hard to find ; but this is because men seek it amiss, in the visible world and its objects, and not from God. Those who seek the wisdom that comes from above, must abandon their own worldly wisdom ; for the true wisdom is that bright and unfading gem, that pearl of great price, which is gained by parting with all to obtain it (St. Matt. xiii. 44—46.). But God prevents those who ask wisdom of Him ; He begins to make Himself known to us before we begin to seek Him, according to the words of the psalm, "The God of my mercy shall prevent me" (Ps. lix. 10.).

4—16. "He who seeks her early, shall not be wearied by the search, for she will be found sitting at his gates." Kings were accustomed to sit in the gate to administer justice, and to hear complaints, with their counsellors and assessors beside them (2 Sam. xviii. 24 ; xix. 8.). To meditate upon her is the best employment of thought, and the man who attends upon her with vigilance will be soon relieved from care ; for she circumvents those whom she seeks if they are worthy of her, and in the common ways of life discovers herself to them for their good, and meets them with her counsel in all their purposes." The wisdom which consists in the knowledge of God and His will is given to all who sincerely desire it. It is not far to seek ; it is suggested to us in our ordinary daily occupations. It is proclaimed in the streets and highways to all who will attend to it (Prov. viii. 3, 4.). Men are not left to themselves ; wisdom lies in wait for them, and circumvents them, like an enemy in ambush. Thus, St. Augustine observes, that whithersoever men turn their thoughts and attention they will find God : "Wherever thou turnest, He speaks to thee by some of the vestiges which He has impressed upon His works, that when thou fallest away from Him in pursuit of outward objects, He may recall thee by the very forms of those objects, that thou mayest find Him everywhere, and acknowledge Him to be the life and bliss of the soul." The truth flashes upon men, "if they are worthy," that is, if they sincerely love virtue, and wish to know the will of God concerning them ; for God has at all times spoken to men in divers manners,—to the heathen by the natural voice of conscience, as well as to His own people by the prophets. See Deut. xxx. 11—14. Acts xvii. 27, 28.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, VI.

17 For the very true beginning of her is the desire
2 Or, nurture. of ² discipline; and the care of discipline is love;

18 and love is the keeping of her laws; and the giving heed unto her laws is the assurance of incorruption;

19 and incorruption maketh us near unto God:

20 therefore the desire of wisdom bringeth to a kingdom.

21 If your delight be then in thrones and sceptres,
 O ye kings of the people, honour wisdom, that ye may reign for evermore.

17—20. "For the beginning of wisdom is the most true desire of discipline; and the care of discipline, or the wish to profit by instruction, is love; and the effect of love is the keeping of her laws; and the attention to her laws is the assurance of incorruption; and incorruption makes men to be near to God: thus, the desire of wisdom leads up to a kingdom." The form of speech here is what the orators called a "climax," in which the speaker ascends by "steps," and completes his sentence by a "period." A similar "climax" is found in Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. Here the steps lead to the summit of perfection, which is "nearness to God." The first access to wisdom is the "desire" of knowledge from a "pure motive;" not out of curiosity or love of worldly gain, but in order to be edified, or to edify others. Then there must be a "care" or anxiety to profit by instruction; then the love of the commandment, which makes us not only interested in what we hear, but doers of the work; then we attain to the righteousness which is immortal, the renewal of the Divine image in man; and when this is gained we are near to God, we have communion with Him by partaking of His holiness through the indwelling of His Spirit (1 John iv. 13.). This exalts us to a kingly rank, a higher dignity than any that the world can bestow upon us. See Eccles. viii. 1. Exod. xix. 6.

21 "O tyrants of the people, since ye delight in thrones and sceptres, honour wisdom that ye may reign for ever!" These words are found in the Greek Version of Prov. ix. 6, "Forsake folly, that ye may reign for ever." The ancient salutation of monarchs was, "Let the king live for ever!" (1 Kin. i. 31. Neh. ii. 3.), which was a desire that the king's life might be prolonged, and that his throne might be established for many generations (Ps. lxi. 6.). But the kingdom here rather signifies the exalted condition of those whom wisdom has brought near to God, that they may be kings and priests to Him. The true object of ambition is the glory that comes from God only, or to be great in the kingdom of heaven (St. Matt. xx. 26, 27.). "If ye desire wealth, love the true riches; if ye seek the summit of true honour, strive for the kingdom of heaven; if ye love the glory of high rank, hasten to be enrolled in the heavenly court of the angels" (St. Gregory).

[The Vulgate adds: "Love the light of wisdom, all ye rulers of the people!"]

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, VII.

22 As for wisdom, what she is, and how she came up, I will tell you, and will not hide mysteries from you: but will seek her out from the beginning of her nativity, and bring the knowledge of her into light, and will not pass over the truth.

23 Neither will I go with consuming envy; for such a man shall have no fellowship with wisdom.

24 But the multitude of the wise is the welfare of the world: and a wise king is the upholding of the people.

25 Receive therefore instruction through my words, and it shall do you good.

CHAPTER VII.

1 All men have their beginning and end alike. 8 He preferred wisdom before all things else. 15 God gave him all the knowledge which he had. 22 The praise of wisdom.

I MYSELF also am a mortal man, like to all, and the offspring of him that was first made of the earth,

22, 23. "I will now explain what wisdom is, and how she came into existence, or began her work in man; I will not conceal her mysteries from you, but I will trace the knowledge of her from the beginning of the creation" (see Prov. viii. 22, 23.); "for to grudge this knowledge would be to err from the way of truth, and to take consuming envy for my guide; but the envious man can have no fellowship with wisdom." See James iii. 15, 16, 17. It is in us, who learn wisdom from God, that wisdom has a beginning or nativity; in herself she is eternal; her mysteries were hid in God, before they were revealed to man (1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 9, 10.). One of the chief foes of true wisdom is envy, the evil eye, which "melts" with grief at the prosperity of others (Ps. cxii. 10.). Hence the wisdom of Moses rebuked Joshua, when he was envious for his sake (Num. xi. 27—29.). The same wisdom was in St. Paul, when he kept back nothing that was profitable to his hearers, declaring the whole counsel of God (Acts xx. 20, 27.); obeying the precept, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

24, 25. "A multitude of wise counsellors and a prudent king ensures worldly prosperity and the security of a nation; therefore attend to my words, and it shall be for your profit." Much more does the heavenly wisdom bring salvation to the world, and the spiritual society of the Church is upheld by the wise government of her King, who is the Head of the Body, the Prince and Saviour of His people. See Prov. xi. 14; xxiv. 6. Eccles. ix. 14—18.

CHAPTER VII.

1. "Since wisdom is the gift of God to the humble, who are abased by the thought of their own weakness, I begin my discourse by confessing that I also am by nature a mortal man, and like all the

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, VII.

2 and in my mother's womb was fashioned to be
^a Job 10. 10. flesh in the time of ten months, ^abeing compacted
in blood, of the seed of man, and the pleasure that
^b ch. 4. 6. came with ^bsleep.

3 And when I was born, I drew in the common
air, and fell upon the earth, which is of like nature,
and the first voice which I uttered was crying, as
all others do.

4 I was nursed in swaddling clothes, and that
with cares.

5 For there is no king that had any other begin-
ning of birth.

^c Job 1. 21. 6 ^c For all men have one entrance into life, and
¹ Tim. 6. 7. the like going out.

"rest of mankind, a descendant of Adam the protoplast, who was
"formed out of the earth." So St. Paul humbled himself when the
people of Lystra would have worshipped him (Acts xiv. 14, 15.). His
bodily wants and sufferings reminded him of his mortality, when he
was exalted by the abundance of his revelations. The pains of sickness
have in like manner abased the pride of conquerors, when the exulta-
tion of victory made them forget that they were men (Ps. ix. 20;
xlix. 11, 12. Job i. 21. Eccles. v. 15.). Adam is here called (1) the "pro-
toplast," or first-formed (an expression which was used by several early
Christian writers), because God formed him from the dust of the earth
to be the first parent of the human race; (2) the "earth-born," not
because the earth was his parent, but because his bodily substance
was of the earth earthy, framed and fashioned by the hands of His
Maker (Job x. 8. Ps. cxix. 73; cxxxix. 14—16.).

2. "And my bodily substance was shaped" (as the clay is moulded
by the potter, or the sculpture fashioned by the artist) "in my mother's
"womb within the space of ten months" (so that I was not an abortive,
born out of due time); "thus was I begotten and brought forth as
"a child of man, born of the flesh and its concupiscence." We are all
the work of God's hands (Ps. cxxxviii. 8.), yet as children of Adam
we receive this wonderful bodily organization tainted with sin, for that
which is born of the flesh is flesh (St. John iii. 6. Job x. 9—11.
Eccles. xi. 5.).

3. "As soon as I was born, I breathed, and drew in the common
"air, which sustains the life of man and beast" (Eccles. iii. 19.); "and
"when I fell, the earth in compassion for my weakness received me
"into her bosom" (Ecclus. xl. 1.); "and when I first caused my voice
"to be heard I cried, like other infants." So when the infant Moses
was found, "the babe wept" (Exod. ii. 6.); and this fulfilled the
original prophecy, that the birth of sons should be "in sorrow" (Gen.
iii. 16.); the sorrow that anticipates the miseries of human life and
the funeral in which it ends, even as the swaddling-clothes foreshadow
the grave-clothes. Contrast the case of the infant in Ezek. xvi. 5.

4—6. "I was wrapped in swaddling-clothes and nursed with tender
"care; for no king was born or began his life otherwise. All men

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7 Wherefore ^d I prayed, and understanding was ^d 1 Kin. 3. 7, &c. given me: I called *upon God*, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.

8 I ^e preferred her before sceptres and thrones, ^e Job 23. 15, &c. Prov. 3. 14, 15. & 8. 10, 11. and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her.

9 Neither compared I unto her any ² precious stone, because all gold in respect of her is as a little sand, ² Gr. stone of inestimable price. and silver shall be counted as clay before her.

10 I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light: for the light that cometh from her never goeth out.

11 ^f All good things together came to me with ^f 1 Kin. 3. 13. Prov. 3. 16. Matt. 6. 33. her, and innumerable riches in her hands.

“have one entrance into the world, and are like in their manner “of going out of it.” The circumstances of death may differ, some being cut off prematurely or meeting their end by violence, others dying at an advanced age; but in each case there is the same dissolution of the bodily frame and the same release of the spirit (Job xxi. 23, 25, 26. Eccles. iii. 19, 20.).

7, 8. “Being thus conscious of my mortal frailty and my need of “Divine help” (St. Matt. xxvi. 41.), “I prayed, and understanding was “given to me: I called upon God, and the Spirit of wisdom came to “me; I preferred her to sceptres and thrones, and accounted riches “to be worthless in comparison of her.” It is ever in answer to prayer that the Holy Spirit is given. Solomon obtained wisdom by prayer (1 Kin. iii. 9; iv. 29, 34.). Christ’s disciples prepared themselves for the gift of Pentecost by continuing with one accord in prayer. Our Lord Himself was praying by the river Jordan when the Spirit was seen to descend upon Him. He is a Spirit of love (Wisd. i. 6.), who comes to those who are athirst for Him. Earthly treasures cannot purchase wisdom; and without wisdom the rich man is poor in the midst of his riches (see Job xxviii. 13—19.). It is wisdom which enables kings to control other men, and not the throne or sceptre, the outward sign of royalty (Prov. viii. 16, 18, 19.).

9, 10. “No precious stone, however priceless in value, was to be “likened to her; when compared to her, gold and silver are but a “little sand and clay.” Perhaps alluding to Solomon’s making silver as plentiful as the “stones of the street” (2 Chr. i. 15.); his material wealth being mere refuse as compared with the heavenly treasure which God gave him, the word which is as silver tried in the fire (Ps. xii. 6.). “I loved her above health, beauty, and light; for there “is in her a beam of light that is never extinguished.” As health and beauty are the chief ornaments of the body (*Plato*), so wisdom is the glory of the soul (Prov. iii. 2, 3.), filling it with the light of the truth, which shines upon it from God Himself,—a beam of joy and happiness which no darkness of trouble or adversity can extinguish.

11, 12. “I asked for wisdom, but I obtained more” (2 Chr. i. 12.); “for all other good things,—wealth and honour,—came with her, and “riches innumerable in her hands; and I rejoiced to find that

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12 And I rejoiced in *them* all, because wisdom goeth before them: and I knew not that she was the mother of them.

² Gr. *without guile.*

³ Gr. *without envy.*

13 I learned ² diligently, and do communicate *her* ³ liberally: I do not hide her riches.

⁴ Or, *enter friendship with God.*

14 For she is a treasure unto men that never faileth: which they that use ⁴ become the friends of God, being commended for the gifts that come from learning.

⁵ Or, *God grant.*

⁶ Or, *are to be spoken of.*

15 ⁵ God hath granted me to speak as I would, and to conceive as is meet for the things that ⁶ are given me: because it is he that leadeth unto wisdom, and directeth the wise.

16 For in his hand are both we and our words; all wisdom also, and knowledge of workmanship.

17 For he hath given me certain knowledge of the things that are, namely, to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements:

"all these things were at her disposal, for when I first sought her
"I knew not that she was the parent of earthly gain as well as the giver
"of spiritual benefits" (2 Chr. i. 10. See also St. Matt. vi. 33.).

13, 14. "But I sought her teaching with no mercenary motive,
"and I now impart my knowledge of her without grudging" (see St. Matt. x. 8. 1 Pet. iv. 10.); "nor do I hide the wealth which she
"has given me, for it is an inexhaustible treasure which men may
"impart without impoverishing themselves" (compare the five loaves which the disciples distributed to the multitude, St. Matt. xiv. 19, 20.);
"and by thus using it they attain to friendship with God, being confirmed and not retarded in their progress by the instruction which
"is freely given." This friendship with God is thus an imitation of Him "who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" (James i. 5.).

15. "May God grant me the power to speak prudently, and to
"conceive thoughts that are worthy of the subjects of my speech;
"for He alone is the Guide in the ways of wisdom, and the Director
"of the wise!" The friends of God are not only instructed in His mysteries, but are also enabled to speak of them with condescension to the ignorance of their hearers; and His correction chastens them, lest they lose through pride what they obtained through humility. See Is. l. 4. 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

16. "From Him we have our being, and He puts words into our
"mouths" (see Exod. iv. 11. Jer. i. 9.); "and the power of thought
"which leads to the skilful execution of any work is His gift." Such was the gift which was bestowed upon Bezaleel (Exod. xxxi. 3, 4, 5.).

17—21. "And He has given me an unerring knowledge of essential
"truths and principles; of the system of the universe, and of the forces
"that are at work in the elements; the divisions of time into yearly,

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18 the beginning, ending, and midst of the times: the alterations of the turning *of the sun*, and the change of seasons:

19 the circuits of years, and the positions of stars:

20 the natures of living creatures, and the furies of wild beasts: the violence of winds, and the reasonings of men: the diversities of plants, and the virtues of roots:

21 and all such things as are either secret or manifest, them I know.

22 For wisdom, ^g which is the worker of all ^g ch. 8. 5.

“monthly, and daily periods, and their beginnings, endings, and intervals; the vicissitudes and alternations of seasons; the cycles of years and the positions of stars; the natures of living creatures, and the dispositions of wild beasts; the forces of winds, and the devices of men; the varieties of plants, and the virtues of roots: and thus my knowledge extends to things hidden from common view, as well as to things that are manifest to all.” The wisdom given to Solomon was not only skill in government, but a “largeness of heart,” grasping the nature of the things in heaven and earth (1 Kin. iv. 29, 33.). His knowledge of animals appears in the moral lessons which he drew from their habits: thus he referred to the simplicity of the bird, in Prov. i. 17; to the roe and ant, in Prov. vi. 5—8; to the ox, in Prov. vii. 22; to the swallow, horse, ass, and dog, in Prov. xxvi. 2, &c.; to the bird forsaking its nest, in Prov. xxvii. 8; to the lion and bear, in Prov. xxviii. 1, 15; to the leech, eagle, serpent, jerboas, locusts, spiders and goats, in Prov. xxx. 15—31. His knowledge of plants included the use of herbs and roots as medicines for the cure or relief of wounds and maladies, for this is a branch of the Divine gift of wisdom. The heathen worship of Æsculapius acknowledged that the art of healing was Divine; and God Himself declared it at the healing of the waters of Marah (Exod. xv. 25, 26. Eccclus. xxxviii. 4—8.). His knowledge of men’s reasonings included the discernment of men’s characters, and their fitness for his purposes; also, the laws and customs of nations, and the causes of their prosperity or success in war (see Prov. xxi. 22; xxiv. 6; xi. 14; xv. 22.). His enquiries extended to the hidden causes of events and phenomena, as well as to the effects which were matters of daily experience. Thus Solomon’s wisdom included all kinds of knowledge, and the best use of knowledge for his own profit and the good of others. “Wisdom,” says Philo, “is the science of things human and Divine, and of their causes. It is the science of sciences, varied by the different subject-matter with which it deals, but ever leading men’s thoughts to God. It is occupied with the entire life of man, and with all the works of God. The feast which Wisdom prepares for her guests is the contemplation of the things in heaven and earth” (Prov. ix. 1, 2.).

22, 23. “All this knowledge was taught me by the Divine Wisdom, that contrives and perfects all things. For the Spirit of God, from

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² Gr. *only begotten.*

things, taught me : for in her is an understanding spirit, holy, ² one only, manifold, subtil, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good, quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good,

23 kind to man, stedfast, sure, free from care, having all power, overseeing all things, and going through all understanding, pure, and most subtil, spirits.

"whose inspiration wisdom is derived, is a *Spirit of intelligence* and "reflection upon the works of the Creator; a *holy Spirit*, abhorring "sin; *one only*, in that He is singular in His perfection, without equal "or rival; He is *manifold in His operations*, varying His gifts to "men according to their capacity, and imparting to all things their "own proper forms and attributes, since of Him and through Him "and to Him are all things" (Rom. xi. 36.). "He is *subtle*, like the "air or the light, for He is the breath of the Almighty, and the light "that shines inwardly; His presence is spiritually discerned; the "earthly-minded cannot apprehend it" (1 Cor. ii. 14.). "He is *lively*, "or, continually in motion, like the wheels in the vision of Ezekiel" (Ezek. i. 14, 20, 21.); "shewing His presence in the rushing mighty "wind, or in the earthquake, or by stirring men's hearts and arousing "them to action" (Ezek. iii. 12—14. St. Mark i. 12.). "He is also "*clear*, making the things of God plain to us, expounding them to "each nation in its own language" (Acts ii. 6.). "He is *undefiled*, "like the light, which contracts no impurity when it shines upon the "mire. He is *plain*, not concealing the truth in proverbs, but "imparting it to us without reserve. He is *not subject to hurt*, for "though His goodness is grieved by man's sin and ingratitude, His "Deity cannot be impaired by loss; and to those whom He strengthens "to endure reproach and persecution for righteousness' sake it is "said, 'Who is he that shall harm you? In all these things ye are "'more than conquerors'" (see 1 Pet. iii. 13. 2 Cor. vi. 6.). "He is "a *lover of the good*, even of the good which His own work of sancti- "fication produces in us. He is *quick*, or severe in reproving the "wickedness of the world, and convincing it of sin. He is *irresistible*, "and nothing can hinder or obstruct His purpose. He is *beneficent*, "a benefactor, even to the ungrateful and unworthy; He is a *lover of* "men, who are, above all created beings, partakers of His consolations; "He is *stedfast and sure*, for He makes us steadfast when temptations "assail our faith and constancy; He is *free from care*, for where He "dwells the soul is resigned to the will of God, and casts its burden "upon Him" (1 Cor. vii. 32.). "He is *omnipotent*, and imparts to us "the faith to which all things are possible" (St. Mark ix. 23.). "He "is present everywhere, *overseeing all things*. Lastly, *He goes through* "all understanding, pure, and most subtil spirits, for all created intelli- "gences are full of Him, and He enlightens angels and archangels "as well as the spirits of men." "God's influence extends to the very "essence of all things, so that without His Deity supporting them

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24 For wisdom is more moving than any motion : she passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness.

25 For she is the ²breath of the power of God, ² Or, *vapour*. and a pure ³influence flowing from the glory of the ³ Or, *stream*. Almighty : therefore can no defiled thing fall into her.

26 For she is the ^bbrightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and ⁱthe image of his goodness. ^b Heb. 1. 3. ⁱ 2 Cor. 4. 4. Col. 1. 15.

27 And being but one, she can do all things : and remaining in herself, she ⁴maketh all things ⁴ Or, *createth*.

“they could not continue in being. All things are thus partakers “of God; they are His offspring. His Spirit penetrates all, and reaches “unto everything which is. For His wisdom upholds and sustains them” (Hooker).

24. “For the Spirit of wisdom is the most powerful of the forces by “which mind or matter is set in motion, and He fills and pervades “all things by His pure and subtle influence.” It was by this pure energy that the Spirit of the Lord gave form to shapeless matter in the creation (Gen. i. 2.). Hereby He still disposes all things, and moulds them to His purpose.

25. “The wisdom which He inspires is the breath of the power “of God, and the pure effluence of the glory of the Almighty, and “nothing that is polluted can fall into it.” As the vapour rises from the water, and the stream issues from the fountain, so God’s Spirit proceeds from Him, and is one with Him.

26. “It is also the effulgence of the eternal glory, the unspotted “mirror of the operation of God, and the image of His goodness.” For wisdom is from that Eternal Spirit, who is God of God and Light of Light; for as the Son is the effulgence of the Father’s glory (Heb. i. 3.), the Spirit is the glory of the Father and the Son, and in His light we see light, the uncreated eternal light which dwells in the Deity itself. The gift of faith, by which we attain to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, is from Him; and we thereby perceive the Divine perfections as they were revealed to us in Him who is the image of the invisible God. He was the spotless mirror in whom the Apostles saw the Father, for He was inseparably one with Him, as light is inherent in the sun (St. John xiv. 9, 10.). He is especially the image of His goodness, for the Father sent Him to reveal that goodness to us, which was first manifested in the creation, and then in the redemption and reconciliation of the world.

27. “This inspiration proceeds from one Spirit, yet it has power “over all things; it changes and renews everything, whilst it remains “itself unchanged; and throughout all generations it passes into holy “souls, and makes them friends of God and prophets.” This is the work of the one Spirit in all His manifold operations (1 Cor. xii. 11.); to make all things new (Rev. xxi. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17.); to renew the face of the earth (Ps. civ. 30.), and also to give men new hearts (Ezek.

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new: and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets.

28 For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom.

29 For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it.

30 For after this cometh night: but vice shall not prevail against wisdom.

CHAPTER VIII.

2 He is in love with wisdom: 4 for he that hath it hath every good thing.

21 It cannot be had but from God.

WISDOM reacheth from one end to another mightily: and ²sweetly doth she order all things.

² Or,
profitably.

xi. 19, 20.). By His inspiration Abraham, Moses, and the prophets attained to friendship with God, receiving His revelations, and conversing with Him in prayer (Exod. xxxiii. 11.).

28—30. "For there is no way to be loved and accepted by God "but by conversing with Wisdom" (especially the wisdom that is gained by meditation upon His revealed word, see Ps. i. 2. Ecclus. xiv. 20.); "for Wisdom is more glorious than the sun, and is found, "when compared with the whole system of the stars, to excel them "in light; for their splendour is interrupted by intervals of darkness, "but the night of wickedness has no power to resist the brightness "of Wisdom." So in Ps. xix. the law of God is said to enlighten the eyes of the soul, as the sun is the glory of the natural world. See Ecclus. xlii. 16.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. "Wisdom is therefore most essential to kings and rulers; for she "is a power of government, embracing all persons and things within her "control, and ordering and disposing them with prudence and discretion; assigning to each their proper place, so that they submit to her "laws, not by constraint, but willingly." Such is the perfection of government; for it is the imitation of God Himself. "All things have "their beginning from Him, by Him their continuance, and in Him "their end. In power He ordereth them, but yet with gentleness; "mightily, but yet in an amiable manner; so that under Him they "feel no unpleasant constraint; framed they are to His inclination "without violence to their own: such is the course of His heavenly "regiment; such His wisdom to overrule forcibly without force" (*Hooker*). "God governs all things amiably according to the quality "and condition of their nature; disposing men in measure, number, and "weight (xi. 20.), so that they work correspondently to the end for "which they were created; and thus God works, not infinitely, but "according to that law which He is to Himself" (*Ib.*). Hence ancient writers took this verse as a description of Christ Himself, who is both the Wisdom and the Power of God (1 Cor. i. 24.). He was the light

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2 I loved her, and sought *her* out from my youth,
I desired ² to make *her* my spouse, and I was a ² Or, *to marry her to myself.*
lover of her beauty.

3 In that she is conversant with God, she magnifieth her nobility: yea, the Lord of all things himself loved her.

4 For she is ³ privy to the mysteries of the know- ³ Or, *teacher.*
ledge of God, and a ⁴ lover of his works. ⁴ Or, *chooser.*

5 If riches be a possession to be desired in this life; ^a what is richer than wisdom, ^b that worketh all ^a ch. 7. 8, 9.
things? ^b ch. 7. 22.

6 And if ^c prudence work; who of all that are is ^c Ex. 31. 3, 6.
a more cunning workman than she?

to lighten the nations "from one end" of the earth "to the other" (*Origen*); and by His exaltation to God's right hand His influence was extended to fill all things with the might of His power and the sweetness of His mercy,—the Word of God that runneth very swiftly. Upon this application of the words is founded the first of the Antiphons used formerly in the Advent Season: "O Sapientia, &c." (see Dec. 16 in Calendar in the Book of Common Prayer). O Wisdom, which camest forth out of the mouth of the Most High, and reachest from one end to the other, and mightily and sweetly orderest all things, come and teach us the way of prudence.

2—8. "As a woman is sought in marriage for the sake of her beauty "of person, her high rank, her rich portion, her skill in needlework, her "virtues, or her knowledge and experience, so is Wisdom to be desired "for a man's companion through life, as being more lovely than any "bride, and as bringing with her an inexhaustible store of wealth and "a priceless treasure." In order that Wisdom may be a companion through life, she must be sought in youth (*Ecclus. vi. 18.*), and since the Holy Scriptures make men wise unto salvation, the Word of God must be known from childhood (*2 Tim. iii. 15—17.*), and preferred to earthly delights and bodily pleasures (*Ps. cxix. 97, 103; xix. 9, 10.*). This is true "philosophy;" it is to be in love with the Wisdom which the written word of God teaches, to take that Wisdom for our guide and companion,—*"Say unto Wisdom, thou art my sister, and call Understanding thy kinswoman"* (*Prov. vii. 4.*). The rank or nobility of Wisdom is shown by her Divine and heavenly birth; she is given in marriage to the soul that seeks her by God Himself. As she is loved by Him, so the man in whom she dwells is beloved of the Lord, as Solomon when he was named Jedidiah (*2 Sam. xii. 24, 25.*), or as Moses was, when he was admitted to a familiar converse with God (*Exod. xxxiii. 11.*). So those in whom Christ dwells partake of His fulness of grace, and are made accepted in the Beloved (*Eph. i. 6.*). Through their union with Him they are promoted to the rank or nobility of the children of God (see *St. Mark iii. 34, 35.*). Wisdom, being conversant with God, is "privy "to His mysteries," initiating men in the knowledge of His ways. This is the attribute of the Eternal Wisdom, who being in the bosom of the Father, declares Him to us (*St. Matt. xi. 27. St. John i. 18.*). Wisdom is also

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7 And if a man love righteousness, her labours are virtues: for she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude: which are such things, as men can have nothing more profitable in their life.

8 If a man desire much experience, she knoweth things of old, and conjectureth *aright* what is to come: she knoweth the subtilties of speeches, and can expound dark sentences: she foreseeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons and times.

9 Therefore I purposed to take her to me to live with me, knowing that she ² would be a counsellor of good things, and a comfort in cares and grief.

a "lover," or chooser "of His works," guiding men to a right choice, to reject the ways of sin, and to work the works of God. Wisdom is rich in all things that sustain life; for she teaches men skill in workmanship, and prudence, and the various arts by which wealth is increased (2 Chr. i. 12. Prov. viii. 11, 12.). Cunning workmen, as Bezaleel, derive their powers from wisdom, the most precious of all "things that are," or are esteemed of value. There is a reference here to the virtuous woman in Prov. xxxi. 10, 12, 13, who is commended for her handiwork as well as for her prudence.

7. "Temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude." In the ethics of Greek philosophy, these are the four cardinal virtues, extolled by the wisdom of the heathen as most beneficial to human life: (1) temperance, including purity and modesty, and the control of the lower appetites; (2) prudence or discretion, and a right choice in action; (3) justice, or right dealing with other men; (4) fortitude, including patience, courage, and perseverance. These being the virtues of natural religion, the teaching of Revelation, whilst it commends them as good and profitable to men, adds the higher theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity (see 1 Tim. vi. 11, 12. Titus ii. 11, 12; iii. 8.).

8. Wisdom also includes practical experience of human affairs, which is so important to kings and rulers: the knowledge derived from history, the examples of men's actions, and their motives and results; and that use of the past which forecasts the future, and provides for contingencies. She can expound riddles, and detect "subtilties," evasions, or sophistries; when parables or figures of speech are employed, she perceives the hidden meaning veiled beneath them. Thus Solomon's wisdom was tested by the Queen of Sheba (1 Kin. x. 1.). Wisdom also includes the careful observation of natural phenomena, by which men discover the approach of earthquakes and other "signs and wonders."

9—12. These considerations of the excellence of Wisdom show how precious an acquisition she is to all, and especially to a king, to whom is committed the government of the people. For Wisdom is his counsellor and comforter in private, and gives him honour and influence in public, so that none despise his youth, and even the aged reverence him, and hear him with attention. See above, iv. 8, 9. Ecclus. xlvii. 13, 14. Job xxix. 7, 8, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23. By Wisdom also he has a "quick

10 For her sake I shall have estimation among the multitude, and honour with the elders, though I be young.

11 ^d I shall be found of a quick conceit in judgment, and shall be admired in the sight of great men. ^d 1 Kin. 3. 28.

12 ^e When I hold my tongue, they shall bide my leisure, and when I speak, they shall give good ear unto me: if I talk much, they shall lay their hands upon their mouth. ^e Job 29. 8, 9, 10.

13 Moreover ^f by the means of her I shall obtain immortality, and leave behind me an everlasting memorial to them that come after me. ^f ver. 17.

14 I shall ² set the people in order, and the nations ² Or, govern. shall be subject unto me.

15 Horrible tyrants shall be afraid, when they do but hear of me; I shall ³ be found good among the ³ Or, appear. multitude, and valiant in war.

16 ⁴ After I am come into mine house, I will repose myself with her: for her conversation hath no bitterness; and to live with her hath no sorrow, but mirth and joy. ⁴ Or, Being entered into mine house.

17 Now when I considered these things in myself, and ⁵ pondered them in my heart, how that to be allied unto wisdom ^h is immortality; ⁵ Prov. 7. 3. ^h ver. 13.

18 and great pleasure it is to have her friendship; and in the works of her hands are infinite riches; and in the exercise of conference with her, prudence; and in talking with her, a ⁵ good report; I went ⁵ Or, fame. about seeking how to ⁶ take her to me. ⁶ Or, marry her.

“conceit in judgment,” a ready answer when a cause is to be tried, and judgment is to be given upon it (1 Kin. iii. 27, 28.).

13—16. “Wisdom, and the virtues which she teaches, will cause me “to be honoured in my lifetime, and celebrated as a good and beneficent “ruler after my death. I shall be a terror to tyrants and oppressors, but “beloved by the people who are subject to me.” One of the rewards of virtue is the “immortality of fame,” or the grateful remembrance in which it is held after death (see iv. 1. Ps. cxii. 6.), being known with God and with men. But there is a better reward in the “joy and “mirth” which accompanies a good conscience, whose peace is not troubled by remorse or guilt, or the storms of evil passions. See Prov. iii. 17, 18, 21, 22. St. Matt. xi. 29.

17, 18. Wisdom is again compared to a wealthy and accomplished bride, bringing the best gifts and endowments to the mind that obtains

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19 For I was a witty child, and had a good spirit.

20 Yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled.

21 Nevertheless, when I perceived that I could not otherwise obtain her, except God gave her me; and that was a point of wisdom also to know whose gift she was; I ²prayed unto the Lord, and besought him, and with my whole heart I said,

² Or, *went*.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *A prayer unto God for his wisdom, 6 without which the best man is nothing worth, 13 neither can he tell how to please God.*

her friendship. For those who, by meditation upon God's word, converse with the wisdom which He teaches, "exercise themselves unto godliness," a nobler "exercise" than that of the body, by which men prove their strength (Ps. xxxvii. 30, 31. 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8.).

19, 20. The king adds, that God had given him from childhood good natural abilities, and a soul inclined to virtue: "If I should not rather say that I myself am the immortal soul, the offspring of God, the Father of spirits, from whom that soul derived its goodness and generous nature, and came into a body that was free from blemish, and fitted to be its "servant and instrument." There may be an allusion here to the speculations of Greek philosophy concerning the preexistence of souls; but the mind of the writer was probably guided by the teaching of Holy Scripture concerning the human soul, that men are not born "at all "adventurè" (ii. 2.), but that their souls are of heavenly origin, and that their various dispositions and states of life are foreordained by the eternal purpose of God (Isa. lvii. 16. Jer. xxxviii. 16. Ezek. xviii. 4. Zech. xii. 1.). Thus St. Paul, in Rom. ix. 11, 12, says that Jacob and Esau were known to God before their birth, but not as souls that already had existed, or had done any good or evil. An ancient writer says, "Who but Christ was good before His birth, and who but the "Word incarnate came into a body undefiled?"

21. Whatever advantages he possessed by nature, he is constrained to acknowledge his weakness and insufficiency without the help of God. According to one interpretation, "he could not be temperate" unless it was given to him by God; and if he could not control his own passions, how should he rule others? See 1 Kin. iii. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 5. The other meaning is, "I could not otherwise retain her," or obtain permanent possession of Wisdom, "unless God give her me;" and this is to be preferred (see Ecclus. vi. 27; xv. 1.). It was a point of Wisdom to know whose gift she was: those could not be wise, who were not conscious of their own ignorance and frailty; for wisdom begins with self-knowledge (1 Cor. viii. 2. Gal. vi. 3.). Such was the wisdom of Joseph (Gen. xli. 16.), and Daniel (Dan. ii. 30.). Then it leads men to prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and for the knowledge of all things that are profitable for them (Job xxviii. 12, 13, 23, 28. Prov. ii. 3—6. James i. 5.). Therefore the king prays with fervour for help from above, and calls upon God with his whole heart (see Ps. cxix. 10, 145, 146.).

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, IX.

- O** GOD of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, ^a who hast made all things with thy word, ^a Gen. 1. Ps. 33. 9. John 1. 3.
- 2 and ordained man through thy wisdom, that he should ^b have dominion over the creatures which thou hast made, ^b Gen. 1. 28. Ps. 8. 6.
- 3 and order the world according to equity and righteousness, and execute judgment with an upright heart:
- 4 give ^c me wisdom, that sitteth by thy throne; and reject me not from among thy children: ^c 1 Kin. 3. 9.
- 5 for I ^d thy servant and son of thine handmaid am a feeble person, and of a short time, and too young for the understanding of judgment and laws. ^d Ps. 86. 16. & 116. 16.

CHAPTER IX.

1, &c. This prayer for the gift of wisdom is based upon that of Solomon in 2 Chr. i. 7—10. The wisdom sought for consists of a right understanding of the laws of God, according to which His people were to be governed. The prayer addresses God as the Lord of mercy, who has compassion upon the work of His hands, and had shown His lovingkindness to the patriarchs and fathers of the chosen race, as well as His power in creating all things with His word. He had bestowed a special care in the framing of man, the noblest of His earthly creatures, to whom He deputed a dominion over the other beings with which He peopled the earth (see Gen. i. 26. Ps. cxv. 16.). This dominion belonged to the Divine image which was impressed upon man (1 Cor. xi. 7.). He was created to govern; and the authority of kings is but a branch of the authority which man received originally from the Creator, "to order the world in equity," or rather in "piety," with a spirit of reverence for God and His laws, and a mild and merciful treatment of those that were made subject to him.

4. Wisdom was the attribute of God which was manifested in the creation, and is continually declared in His government of the world (Prov. iii. 19; viii. 22, 23.). Wisdom sits by the thrones of God's dominion, as counsellors and assessors attend upon earthly kings in their various jurisdictions (on the thrones, see Ps. cxxii. 5. 2 Chr. xix. 5, 6.). For He who is all-wise can do nothing without wisdom. Judgment and justice, mercy and truth, are inseparable from His government (Ps. lxxxix. 14.). What is said figuratively of these attributes and properties of the Divine nature is literally true of Christ as the Word of the Father, and the Wisdom and Power of God, who as Son of man is God's assessor, being placed at His right hand (1 Cor. i. 24. Heb. i. 13.). Without the aid of the Divine Wisdom the king could not maintain his authority; he would be "rejected," or degraded from the rank of God's children or servants.

5. His mother was God's handmaid, and he had learned from childhood whose servant and minister he was in the kingdom (2 Tim. i. 5.); but he was young and tender (1 Chr. xxix. 1.), and his weakness and mortality pleaded for help from above, that he might govern, not by

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, IX.

6 For though a man be never so perfect among the children of men, yet if thy wisdom be not with him, he shall be nothing regarded.

^e 1 Chr. 28. 5. 7 Thou hast chosen me to be a ^eking of thy people, and a judge of thy sons and daughters:

^f 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13. 8 ^fthou hast commanded me to build a temple upon thy holy mount, and an altar in the city wherein thou dwellest, ^ga resemblance of the holy tabernacle, ^hwhich thou hast prepared from the beginning.

ⁱ Heb. 8. 5. 9 And ⁱwisdom was with thee: which knoweth thy works, and was present when thou madest the world, and knew what was acceptable in thy sight, and right in thy commandments.

10 O send her out of thy holy heavens, and from

the maxims of worldly wisdom, but by those laws of God which he was required to read daily (Deut. xvii. 18—20.).

6. Mere worldly wisdom and political skill, though carried to perfection, are to be accounted as worthless without the knowledge of God's laws and of the Holy Scriptures (see 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.). So prophets and apostles are to be esteemed, not for the natural eloquence or poetic beauty of their writings, but for the Divine inspiration that was in them (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.).

7. It was not merely by the will of his father David, but by the appointment of God, declared through Nathan the prophet (1 Chr. xxii. 9.), that Solomon was chosen to be King of Israel. For the people whom he was to judge were God's peculiar possession, and His sons and daughters (Is. xliii. 6, 7. 2 Cor. vi. 18.). So Joshua was ordained, in answer to the prayer of Moses that the congregation of the Lord might not be left as sheep which have no shepherd (Num. xxvii. 15—20.).

8. Solomon, besides the ordinary duties of a king, had the special work assigned to him of erecting the Temple in Mount Moriah, in fulfilment of the prediction in the days of Abraham, "the Lord will provide," and of the vow of his father David (Ps. cxxxii. 1—3.); the place being also marked out by the angel that smote the people (1 Chr. xxi. 18. 2 Chr. iii. 1.). Here also he made and dedicated the golden altar, and the rest of the sacred furniture (1 Kin. vii. 48—50.). The Temple was a "resemblance of the holy tabernacle" in its parts and furniture, as the tabernacle was a copy of the heavenly pattern which Moses saw in the Mount (Exod. xxv. 40.).

9. The attribute of Wisdom which was manifested in the creation of the world, was again declared in the ordering of the tabernacle, and the skill which was given to Bezaleel and the others who executed the work. The Spirit of Wisdom, which enabled those men to complete that particular work, is also given to lead us generally in the way of uprightness and the path of God's commandments. See Ps. cxliiii. 10: xxvii. 11.

10. He prays that the Spirit of Wisdom may be with him, to teach him the will of God, and to enable him to perform it. This was the

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, IX.

the throne of thy glory, that being present she may labour with me, that I may know what is pleasing unto thee.

11 For she knoweth and understandeth all things, and she shall lead me soberly in my doings, and preserve me ²in her power.

² Or, by her power, or, glory.

12 So shall my works be acceptable, and then shall I judge thy people righteously, and be worthy to sit in my father's seat.

13 For ^kwhat man is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is?

^k Is. 40. 13.
Eccclus. 1. 6.
Rom. 11. 34.
1 Cor. 2. 16.

14 For the thoughts of mortal men are ³miserable, ³ Or, fearful. and our devices are but uncertain.

15 For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and ¹the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things. ¹² Cor. 5. 1, 4.

unspeakable gift which Christ's intercession obtained for His disciples, that the Spirit who had inspired the prophets and psalmists in ancient times should be given to them to abide with them for ever (St. John xiv. 16, 17.).

11. Wisdom brings with her the knowledge of the truth, and sobriety and holiness of life; and her power or "glory" keeps men in peace and safety.

12. "So shall I find favour and good understanding in the sight of "God and man" (Prov. iii. 4.); and by prudence in government I shall be found a fit successor to my father in the seats, or "thrones," which are set for the administration of justice (see above, ver. 4.).

13. For not only are the secret counsels of God too deep for man to fathom, but even in ascertaining His revealed will we need help from above (Is. xl. 13. Ps. lxxvii. 13, 19. Rom. xi. 33, 34.). The heathen had no such knowledge of God's laws as was given to Israel. So man by the light of nature could not ascertain the things of God, which are revealed to us by the Spirit. See 1 Cor. ii. 9—12.

14. The thoughts of men, even of the wisest, are but timid and doubtful conjectures, and their reasonings are liable to error. Those who professed to be wise became fools, for God has made foolish the wisdom of this world (Rom. i. 22. 1 Cor. i. 20.). He revealed to babes the things which were hidden from the wise and prudent in their enquiries for truth.

15. The thoughtful mind, whether it is occupied in learned researches or busied with the cares of government, is much impeded by the infirmities of the bodily frame; and the burden of mortality weakens its power to apprehend Divine mysteries or heavenly things. So St. Paul says, "While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord," and "we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened" (2 Cor. v. 4, 6.); not blaming the body itself, but describing the evils of the state of mortality, and the bondage of corruption, from which the body is to be delivered in the resurrection of the just (1 Cor. xv. 53. Phil. iii.

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² Gr.
at hand.

16 And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are ² before us : but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out ?

^m 1 Cor. 2. 10.

17 And thy counsel who hath known, ^m except thou give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above ?

18 For so the ways of them which lived on the earth were reformed, and men were taught the things that are pleasing unto thee, and were saved through wisdom.

CHAPTER X.

1 What wisdom did for Adam, 4 Noe, 5 Abraham, 6 Lot, and against the five cities, 10 for Jacob, 13 Joseph, 16 Moses, 17 and the Israelites.

SHE preserved the first formed father of the world, that was created alone, and brought him out of his fall,

21.). Whilst the soul is thus burdened, our knowledge is partial and imperfect ; we see God, but only through a glass, darkly (1 Cor. xiii. 12.). The infirmities of the body also weaken the soul's appetite for knowledge : "The soul shrinks from the search for knowledge ; the instruments being weakened wherewithal the soul doth work, it preferreth "rest in ignorance before wearisome labour to know" (*Hooker*). Hence also the soul is hindered in prayer and meditation ; when the spirit is willing the flesh is weak, and our devotions are interrupted by earthly distractions invading us through the bodily senses.

16. Man's wisdom has with much labour and industry investigated the things on earth, conjecturing about some things, and discovering others that come more within our closer observation ; but even here there are many things which we cannot explain. But how little do we know of those heavenly bodies which we see above us ! What astronomer can bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, loose the bands of Orion, or guide Arcturus and his sons ? (Job xxxviii. 31, 32.). "Touching the "Almighty, we cannot find Him out ; we cannot order our speech by "reason of darkness" (Job xxxvii. 19. Compare 2 Esdr. iv. 21.).

17. Far more difficult is it to ascertain the counsel of God ; for this knowledge is given by the Holy Spirit, and is not to be attained by man's unaided efforts (Ps. cxxxix. 6.). God by His grace and inspiration makes men know His will ; and it was for this end that His Spirit should be poured out upon all flesh (Joel ii. 28.).

18. God in His mercy showed to the erring inhabitants of the earth the light of His truth, that they might return to the right way and amend their lives ; and by this wisdom which He imparted "all who "pleased Him from the beginning of the world" were saved. The properties ascribed to "Wisdom" here are like those which are attributed to "faith" in Heb. xi. 1, 2, &c.

CHAPTER X.

1. Adam, "the protoplast," the father of the inhabitants of the world,

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2 and ^a gave him power to rule all things.

^a Gen. 1. 28.

was at first created alone (Gen. ii. 18.). He was alone as being without a rival in his dominion over the world, so that it was said of him, "Behold the man is become as *one* of us," because there was none like him on earth (*Targum*, on Gen. iii. 22.). As long as he continued in his uprightness, Wisdom preserved him (Ecclus. xvii. 1—13.). She was to him as the tree of life (Prov. iii. 18.), shielding his body from injury and decay, and his soul from the snares of temptation. When he fell, through hearkening to the voice of his wife, Wisdom did not utterly forsake him, but led him forth from his sin by the way of repentance, and taught him to exercise the authority which the Creator had given him. The repentance and restoration of Adam, though not positively asserted in Scripture, has been generally inferred by Jews and Christians; (1) because when the serpent was cursed, our first parents were not cursed, in that they were "candidates for restoration" (see *Notes* on Gen. iii.); (2) because the enmity between the woman and the serpent implies that she did not continue in the state of rebellion against God; (3) because Adam's shame and awe of God's presence might be taken as the first step in the way of penitence; (4) because the expulsion from Eden was a wholesome discipline and correction, designed by the Creator for Adam's amendment; (5) because God accepted Abel's sacrifice, and the devotion of Enoch, and the worship of Seth and his posterity, whose piety would probably be derived from the precepts of Adam; (6) because the sentence of death was not immediately executed, but a long respite granted that he might have time for repentance. The contrary opinion was rejected as dishonouring to God, ascribing a triumph to Satan, and a failure to the great Shepherd in His search for the hundredth sheep; and though asserted by Tatian and favoured by Calvin, the judgment of Jews and Christians is clearly against it. This judgment found expression in early legends and traditions: one relates that Adam on leaving paradise dwelt in Mount Moriah; here he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, and from his heart lamented. The Jews say that he mourned for 130 years, until the birth of Seth (Gen. v. 3.). Another story describes Noah as placing Adam's remains in the centre of the ark, and praying continually before them, "by the sorrows of Adam the first man, by the blood of Abel, and by the righteousness of Seth;" and Christian writers add that the body was finally entrusted to Melchizedek, and interred by him in Golgotha,—a legend which was the expression of their belief that Adam was saved by Christ's Passion. Thus, in the "Passion according to Nicodemus," our Lord is described as conversing with Adam in the prison of Hades, when He descended into hell; an idea which occurs also in another ancient writer, who says, "He redeemed Adam and his good sons, and restored them to their original state; for it is written, 'He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.'" Another says, "Christ by His passion healed both Adam and Eve: He was lifted up on the cross to save Adam, and to restore the fallen image of God." "He opposed tree to tree, hands extended on the cross to hands stretched out to the forbidden fruit, the thorny crown to the usurped dominion, death to death. This was the medicine of our infirmity, the bringing back of the old Adam to the place whence he fell, to that tree of life whence the evil tree of knowledge had drawn

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- ^b Gen. 4. 8. 3 ^b But when the unrighteous went away from her in his anger, he perished also in the fury wherewith he murdered his brother.
- ^c Gen. 7. 19, 21. 22, 23.
² Pet. 2. 5. 4 For whose cause the ^c earth being drowned with the flood, wisdom again preserved it, and directed the course of the righteous in a piece of wood of small value.
- ^d Gen. 11. 9. 5 Moreover, ^d the nations in their wicked conspiracy being confounded, she found out the righteous, and preserved him blameless unto God, and
- ^e Gen. 22. 10.
² Or, *in*. ^e kept him strong ² against his tender compassion toward his son.
- ^f Gen. 19. 16.
^g 2 Pet. 2. 7.
³ Gr.
Pentapolis. 6 ^f When the ungodly perished, she delivered ^g the righteous man, who fled from the fire which fell down upon ³ the five cities.

“him.” It was also a common opinion that the rescue of Adam’s soul was one purpose of Christ’s descent into hell.

3. When Cain fell away from wisdom in his wrath, he perished in the misery which attended his fratricidal passions; the consequence of the murder being that he was banished from the presence and favour of God, and became a fugitive and vagabond upon the earth, pursued by remorse and the dread of man’s vengeance. Some have thought that there is an allusion here to the tradition that Cain was accidentally slain by his descendant Lamech.

4. The crying sins of Cain and his posterity brought the Deluge upon the earth. But Wisdom preserved the human race, by directing Noah in the building of the ark, which though constructed of light and weak materials, weathered that awful storm and convulsion, because Wisdom was the pilot that controlled its course. See Ecclus. xlv. 17. Heb. xi. 7.

5. The nations of men were frustrated in their ungodly conspiracy at Babel by the confusion of tongues. In the same land, Ur of the Chaldees, there dwelt the just man Abram (who according to the tradition was cast into the brick-kiln for refusing his consent to their design); here Wisdom found him, and kept him blameless in his obedience to God, so that his faith was stronger even than his affection for his only son Isaac, the child of promise. Such was the wisdom of faith (Heb. xi. 17—19.); a higher philosophy than the apathy of the Stoics, or the stern patriotism of the Romans,—such as was shown by Brutus, when he slew his own sons for conspiring against the liberty of the Roman State,—for it was a resolution at all costs to obey God.

6—9. When the five cities of the plain were destroyed, Wisdom delivered Lot, the just and merciful man (2 Pet. ii. 7.), when he escaped from the “heaven-sent fire of the Pentapolis;” that is, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar, though the last was spared at the prayers of Lot. The contrary folly and wickedness of the Sodomites is seen to this day in the asphalt lake, with its barren shores and unwholesome exhalations (Gen. xix. 28. Deut. xxix. 23.), where a region, once rich and fertile, now yields only precocious and unwholesome fruits, ripened

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7 Of whose wickedness even to this day the waste land that smoketh is a testimony, and plants bearing fruit that never come to ripeness: and ^ha standing pillar of salt ^his a monument of an unbelieving soul. ^h Gen. 19. 26.

8 For regarding not wisdom, they gat not only this hurt, that they knew not the things which were good; but also left behind them to the world a memorial of their foolishness: so that in the things wherein they offended they could not so much as be hid.

9 But wisdom delivered from pain those that attended upon her.

10 When ⁱthe righteous fled from his brother's wrath, she guided him in right paths, shewed him the kingdom of God, and gave him knowledge of holy things, made him rich in his travels, and multiplied *the fruit of* his labours. ⁱ Gen. 28. 5, 12.

11 ^kIn the covetousness of such as oppressed him ^kshe stood by him, and made him rich. ^k Gen. 31.

12 She defended him from his enemies, and kept him safe from those that lay in wait, and ^lin a sore conflict she gave him the victory; that he might know that godliness is stronger than all. ^l Gen. 32. 24.

by the excessive heat before their season, or marred by the noxious vapours. There is also an isolated needle of rock, marking—according to tradition—the spot where Lot's wife, because she lingered in her concern for the goods that were left behind, suffered the punishment of her disobedience by being buried in the sulphurous storm which overtook her (Luke xvii. 32. Gen. xix. 26.). Her case was typical of the fate of Sodom,—an example, conspicuous to the ages to come, of the consequences of wandering from the ways of Wisdom; whilst Lot's escape shows what Wisdom does for those who are devoted to her service.

10—12. When Jacob, the righteous man, became a fugitive on account of his brother's wrath, Wisdom was his guide in the way to Padan-aram, and at Beth-el she revealed to him the kingdom of God, in the vision of the ladder, showing the ranks and orders of the angels as the messengers of His providence, and as the subordinate rulers of the world under the King of kings. The same vision admitted him to a knowledge of holy things and holy places chosen for man's access to God, "the gate of heaven," where the great King gives an audience to His subjects (Gen. xxviii. 17.). Wisdom also prospered his labours, and increased the fruits of his industry; and it was by Wisdom, and not by his natural courage and strength, that he was defended from the covetousness of Laban when he wished to defraud him, and from the vindictive purposes of Esau, teaching him to encounter his brother in sole reliance upon

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^m Gen. 37. 23. 13 ^m When the righteous was sold, she forsook
 & 39. 7. him not, but delivered him from sin: ⁿ she went
 Acts 7. 10. down with him into the pit,
ⁿ Gen. 39. 21. 14 and left him not in bonds, till she brought
 & 41. 14, 40, 41.

² Or, the power of them that ruled over him. 14 and left him not in bonds, till she brought him the sceptre of the kingdom, and ² power against those that oppressed him: as for them that had accused him, she shewed them to be liars, and gave him perpetual glory.

^o Ex. 1. 12. 15 ^o She delivered the ³ righteous people and blameless seed from the nation that oppressed them.
 & 12. 42.
^p Or, holy.

^p Ex. 3. 12. 16 ^p She entered into the soul of ^q the servant of the Lord, and ^r withstood dreadful kings in wonders and signs;
^q Josh. 1. 1.
 Ps. 105. 26.
 Heb. 3. 5.
^r Ex. 5. 1. & 7.

10. & 8, & 9, & 10, & 11, & 12, & 13.
 Ps. 105. 27, &c.
^s Ps. 105. 39. 17 rendered to the righteous a reward of their labours, guided them in a marvellous way, ^s and was unto them for a cover by day, and a ⁴ light of stars in the night season;
⁴ Or, flame.

the protection of God and His angels (Gen. xxxii, 1, 2.). Thus also he was shielded from the Perizzites after the slaughter of Shechem (Gen. xxxv. 5.). Lastly, in the mighty wrestling at Peniel, she awarded him the prize of victory, when Jacob, the weak supplanter, was changed into Israel the strong contender with God; and this proved that, however weak in natural strength, godliness is stronger than all the forces that can be brought to resist it (Gen. xxxii. 28. Hos. xii. 3, 4.).

13, 14. When Joseph the just man was sold for a slave, Wisdom went with him into Egypt. Here she stood by him when he was tempted by his mistress, and taught him to reply, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" When he was thrown into the dungeon, Wisdom was still with him, giving him favour in the eyes of the prison-keeper and his two fellow-captives. By her aid he obtained favour in the sight of Pharaoh (Acts vii. 9, 10.), and it was the excellent Wisdom that was in him that caused him to be made the ruler of Egypt (Gen. xli. 39, 40.), so that his false accusers and oppressors were compelled to bow the knee before him (Gen. xli. 43.), as well as his brethren who had sold him into captivity (Gen. xlii. 6.). Thus his innocence, though suspected and slandered for a time, was vindicated, and he obtained the everlasting honour of being a saviour and benefactor to Egypt and many people (Gen. 1. 20.).

15. When the children of Israel, although their conduct to the Egyptians had been just, peaceable, and blameless, were cruelly afflicted by them (see xvii. 2; xix. 14.), Wisdom interfered to deliver them.

16. It was by Wisdom that Moses, who was especially named by God as His servant (Num. xii. 7.), withstood Pharaoh and the princes of Egypt (called "kings" in Ps. cv. 30.), God sending "tokens and wonders" upon them for the confirmation of his words (Ps. cxxxv. 9.).

17, 18. Wisdom also caused the Israelites to receive a just recompence of their labours, when the Egyptians gave them gold and silver vessels and raiment, in the place of the hire that had been withheld

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, XI.

18 ^t brought them through the Red sea, and led ^{t Ex. 14. 21, 22, 29.} them through much water: ^{Ps. 78. 13.}

19 ^u but she drowned their enemies, and cast ^{u Ex. 14. 27, 28.} them up out of the bottom of the deep.

20 Therefore the righteous spoiled the ungodly, and ^x praised thy holy name, O Lord, and magnified ^{x Ex. 15. 1.} with one accord thine hand, that fought for them.

21 For wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of them that cannot speak eloquent.

CHAPTER XI.

5 The Egyptians were punished, and the Israelites reserved in the same thing. 15 They were plagued by the same things wherein they sinned. 17 God could have destroyed them otherwise, 23 but he is merciful to all.

SHE prospered their works in the hand of the holy prophet.

2 ^a They went through the wilderness that was ^{a Ex. 16. 1.} not inhabited, and pitched tents in places where there lay no way.

from them in the days of their bondage (Exod. xii. 35, 36.). It was the wisdom of God's precepts which also taught them the "marvellous way" of their journey through the desert (Deut. iv. 6; viii. 2—5; xxxii. 10—12. Jer. ii. 6.); to follow the cloud, which was a veil or covering in the daytime, and a lamp of fire like the stars by night (Ps. cv. 39.). The same wisdom, which consists in obeying God and following His guidance, brought them safe through the Red Sea, the place of many waters (Heb. xi. 29.).

19. The wisdom of the Israelites, in following God's directions, led to the overthrow of the Egyptians, whose bodies were afterwards thrown by the tide upon the sea shore (Exod. xiv. 30.).

20. Then there was a second spoiling of the Egyptians, when the bodies of their enemies were stripped upon the shore (see Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14.). So Josephus speaks of Moses collecting and distributing the arms and apparel of their fallen enemies. Then the mighty deeds of God's right hand were celebrated in the hymn of Moses (Exod. xv. 1, 6.).

21. Thus the people, who were before dumb with terror and consternation (Exod. xiv. 10—14.), were inspired by the wisdom of God to utter songs of praise and thanksgiving (Ps. viii. 2.).

CHAPTER XI.

1. The children of Israel, as long as they walked in the ways of Wisdom, were successful in all their undertakings (Deut. xxxii. 29.), being led by the hand of Moses (Ps. lxxvii. 20.), the hand that held the rod of God (Exod. xvii. 9.). For Moses was, in a special sense, "the holy prophet of God," having a preeminence above other prophets (Deut. xxxiv. 10.).

2. Whilst they followed Wisdom, they journeyed without losing their way through pathless deserts, though they encamped in places far from men's habitation. See Deut. xxxii. 10. Hos. xiii. 5. Their journey

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^b Ex. 17. 10, 11, 13. 3 ^b They stood against their enemies, and were avenged of their adversaries.

4 When they were thirsty, they called upon thee, and ^c water was given them out of the flinty rock, and their thirst was quenched out of the hard stone.

5 For by what things their enemies were punished, by the same they in their need were benefited.

^d Ex. 7. 17. 6 For instead of a fountain of a perpetual running river ^d troubled with foul blood,

^e Ex. 1. 22. ch. 18. 5. 7 for a manifest reproof of ^e that commandment, whereby the infants were slain, thou gavest unto them abundance of water by a means which they hoped not for:

^f Ex. 7. 20. 8 declaring by that thirst then ^f how thou hadst punished their adversaries.

9 For when they were tried, albeit but in mercy chastised, they knew how the ungodly were judged in wrath and tormented, thirsting in another manner than the just.

from Sinai to Kadesh was thus contrasted with the forty years' wandering which was imposed upon them afterwards, because they forsook the guidance of Wisdom.

3. When the Amalekites harassed them by the way (Deut. xxv. 17, 18.), they fought and repulsed them at Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 10—13.).

4. In their thirst they called upon God, and water was given them out of the precipitous rock of flint, and a remedy for their thirst out of the hard stone. See Deut. viii. 15. Ps. cxiv. 8.

5. So the suffering of thirst, which had been the punishment of their enemies the Egyptians, became to them the occasion of receiving a benefit from God. During the seven days of the plague of blood the Egyptians had no water to drink, whilst the destruction of the fish deprived them of a common article of food (Exod. vii. 21, 24.).

6. For then the Egyptians were troubled with a mass of clotted blood in the place of the river which had been their never-failing supply of water. In Exod. vii. 17, 18, there is mention of the foul smell, and the poisoning of the fish. Josephus relates, that if any one tasted it, it produced sharp inward pains; and Philo adds, that when they dug into the earth, blood issued as from a wound. Even the pools and reservoirs, and the water stored in vessels was affected (Exod. vii. 19.).

7. This plague was sent to convict the Egyptians of the crime of ordering infanticide (compare Exod. i. 22. Ezek. xxxv. 6. Rev. xvi. 5, 6.). But, on the other hand, God gave His own people a large supply of water unexpectedly.

8. At the same time, the thirst which they experienced reminded them of the plague which had been sent upon their adversaries.

9. But the thirst of the righteous was a chastisement sent in mercy, whilst that of the wicked was a just retribution inflicted in wrath. God dealt with Israel as with His own son, for He humbled him by hunger

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10 For these thou didst admonish and try, as a father: but the other, as a severe king, thou didst condemn and punish.

11 Whether they were absent or present, they were vexed alike.

12 For a double grief came upon them, and a groaning for the remembrance of things past.

13 For when they heard by their own punishments the other to be benefited, they ² had some ^{2 Or, perceived.} feeling of the Lord.

14 For whom they rejected with scorn, when he was long before thrown out at the casting forth of *the infants*, him in the end, when they saw what came to pass, they admired.

15 But for the foolish devices of their wickedness, wherewith being deceived they worshipped serpents void of reason, and vile beasts, thou didst send a multitude of unreasonable beasts upon them for vengeance;

and thirst, that He might do him good in his latter end (see Deut. viii. 3. St. Luke iv. 4.); but the Egyptians were rebuked in His hot displeasure, as rebels and enemies who had defied Him (Ps. vi. 1; xxxviii. 1.). The lesser pain is inflicted, in order that the greater condemnation may be avoided (1 Cor. xi. 32.).

10. God admonished Israel as a tender Father; but He dealt with the Egyptians as a severe King, making inquisition for blood, and exacting the full penalty for their crime. Those who are afflicted, but spared, are said to be objects of mercy; but those who are "cut off" in vengeance are objects of "severity." See Rom. xi. 21, 22.

11. The Egyptians were alike wasted by hunger or consumed by thirst, whether they remained by the polluted waters, or withdrew from them.

12. A double grief came upon them; for they were the more vexed at the relief given to the Hebrews in the desert, when they called to mind their own anguish of thirst when their river was smitten.

13. When they heard how water, which had been the instrument of their punishment, was bestowed upon the Hebrews for their good, they perceived that the hand of the Lord was in it (see Ps. lxiv. 9.).

14. And the greatest wonder was that Moses, who had been cast into the river of old, at the time of the exposure of the Hebrew infants, in process of time obtained a marvellous power over the river, so that, unlike the righteous people, they had no relief for their thirst. If the reading is "they admired him," there is a reference to Exod. xi. 3.

15. The Egyptians also received a just penalty for the foolish imaginations of their wickedness, whereby in their error they worshipped reptiles void of reason, and contemptible animals (such as dogs, apes, and crocodiles), when God sent a multitude of brute creatures, such as frogs, flies, and locusts, to be the instruments of His vengeance upon them (see xvi. 9.).

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2 ch. 12. 23.

16 that they might know, that ² wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished.

17 For thy Almighty hand, that made the world of matter without form, wanted not means to send among them a multitude of bears, or fierce lions,

18 or unknown wild beasts, full of rage, newly created, breathing out either a fiery vapour, or filthy scents of scattered smoke, or shooting horrible sparkles out of their eyes:

16. Thus they were taught how the things which are the instruments of men's sins become the means of their punishment. Thus those who drowned the infants were drowned in the Red Sea. Tyrants and oppressors are brought to a sense of their guilt, when it is done to them as they have done to others (Judg. i. 7.). Thus the brethren of Joseph were visited with punishment for their cruelty to Joseph, when the ruler of Egypt would not hear their requests (Gen. xlii. 21.). Jezebel was requited in the plot of ground which she had wrongfully taken from Naboth; the wicked are entrapped in the work of their own hands. "Punishment is but the latter part of sin; it is not a new thing, and "distinct from it." "Sin has a punishment of its own, which usually "attends it, as giddiness does a drunkard. Thus, lying is often punished "by the person being given over to believe a lie; shame attends upon "lust; unjust gains and sacrilege are followed by uncertainty of fortune; "the oppressor dies miserably, and feels the sting of remorse as he approaches the grave. So God corrects men by means of their sins, lest they "make a league with them, and cherish or defend them" (*Jer. Taylor*).

17. God's omnipotent hand, that created the world out of unshaped matter, would have had no difficulty in sending against them a multitude of bears and ferocious lions, instead of the lighter plagues with which he visited them. There is a reference here to Gen. i. 2, in which the earth is said to have been "without form and void," in an imperfect and rudimentary state, before it was arranged and prepared by the Creator for the habitation of living beings or the growth of trees and plants. By the word of God the worlds were framed (Heb. xi. 3.), the periods of the year, the day and night were appointed, and the earth was endued with that beauty, order, and variety which it now possesses. That Word, which caused the earth to bring forth the living creature after his kind (Gen. i. 24.), and multiplied the races which were thus produced, had power to employ these creatures for the utter destruction of evil-doers. Thus, lions were employed in 1 Kin. xiii. 24. 2 Kin. xvii. 25; and bears were sent to assail and wound the youths that mocked Elisha (2 Kin. ii. 24.). But "by little and little does He "put us in remembrance; in the plagues he corrected Pharaoh, not "only by heavy inflictions, as when He slew the firstborn, but by petty "annoyances, the stings of insects, and the loss of his cattle."

18. Or He might have created some new species of wild beasts, unheard of before, and full of wrath; which (like the leviathan in Job xli. 20, 21.) should emit fiery blasts in their breath, with nostrils like bellows, whence smoke proceeds with the noise as of a seething pot, whilst terrible sparks flash from their eyes: a literal realising of the

19 whereof not only the harm might dispatch them at once, but also the terrible sight utterly destroy them.

20 Yea, and without these might they have fallen down with one blast, being persecuted of vengeance, and scattered abroad through the breath of thy power: but thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight.

21 For thou canst shew thy great strength at all times when thou wilt; and who may withstand the power of thine arm?

22 For the whole world before thee is ^has a ²little

^h Is. 40. 15.

² Or, *little weight.*

description which is there given in poetical language of the great marine monster; perhaps also anticipating the terrible engines of destruction which man's ingenuity has since discovered.

19. The very sight of such monsters would kill them with terror, before they felt their power to hurt or destroy them.

20. And even without such terrors as these, they might have fallen by a single blast of Thy wrath, being overtaken by Thy vengeance, and swept away by the breath of Thy power (Exod. xv. 6, 7, 8. Job iv. 9. Is. xi. 4.). But it is Thy will to work in the punishment of sinners, as in the general disposition of the world, by fixed laws of measure, number, and weight. Thus, God's longsuffering waited for 120 years in the time of Noah; and He deferred the destruction of the Amorites till the measure of their iniquity was full (Gen. xv. 16.). In the case of the Jewish people, the Divine vengeance was delayed till they had filled up the measure of their fathers' iniquity (St. Matt. xxiii. 32. 1 Thess. ii. 16.). The law of the goodness of God stints the exercise of His power (see on viii. 1.). "That wisdom, pre-science, and preconception, that order and beauty of operation which "is required in an artist, is most eminently contained in Him who hath "ordered all things in measure, number, and weight" (*Hooker*). These were the qualities of the pattern in the Divine mind, according to which the universe was framed. The same qualities are to be found in the souls which He made, to whom He grants powers and capacities, and space for their exercise, by number, measure, and weight. So in the punishment of sinners His operations are mostly by a fixed law, without interrupting the course of nature, or anticipating the time when it would naturally follow as the result of evil-doing. Thus, Belshazzar's punishment overtook him, (1) by weight ("Tekel"), (2) by number ("Mene"), (3) by measure or division ("Peres"); Dan. v. 26—28. See also 2 Esdr. iv. 36, 37.

21. For to prevail mightily is always with Thee; and who shall withstand the might of Thine arm? "In the word of His majesty He "ordered all things; in the same word He is able to overthrow them; "and nothing decreed by Him shall pass away" (St. Matt. xxiv. 35.).

22. The least motion of Thy will can alter the course of the world, even as a slight change in the scales turns the balance (Is. xl. 15.); and Thou canst make the earth vanish away as a drop of dew disappears beneath the morning sun (Ps. xlv. 6.).

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grain of the balance, yea, as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth.

23 But thou hast mercy upon all; for thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend.

24 For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldest thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it.

25 And how could any thing have endured, if it had not been thy will? or been preserved, if not called by thee?

23. But Thou hast mercy upon all men, because Thou hast power over all things, and Thou regardest not their sins, that they may be brought to repentance (compare xii. 16. Eccclus. ii. 18.). God is patient because He is strong; longsuffering, because He is omnipotent. He waits, that He may have mercy, for He is God and not man (Is. xxx. 18. Hos. xi. 9.). His goodness leads sinners to repentance (Rom. ii. 4.). It is in His mercy that we are chiefly exhorted to imitate Him (St. Luke vi. 36.). "The mercy of man is toward his neighbour; but the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh" (Eccclus. xviii. 13.). Since He delights in mercy, it is by acts of mercy that men can best please Him.

24. "God loves all things that are, and abhors none of the things that He made; for how could He have framed anything, at the same time hating it?" All things were originally good (Gen. i. 31.), because they derived their being from His goodness. God (says Philo) is the Name of the Cause of all goodness. Even things void of life or reason partake of that goodness, inasmuch as they fulfil the end for which they were created. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. xvi. 4.); of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things (Rom. xi. 36.). They are full of Him, for their being is His operation in them, who gave them existence, and maintains them in their existence. That which God abhors in His rational creatures, is not the nature which is His own work, but the sin which has marred and defaced that nature. Hence in Ps. v. 5; xi. 5, God is said to hate the workers of iniquity; and yet "He is good to all" (Ps. cxlv. 5.); He will have all men to be saved (Rom. xi. 32. 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.). Hence the words of the Book of Wisdom are used by the Church in her collects, in which she pleads for pardon, or for the deliverance of Jew and heathen from error and unbelief. God has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth (Ezek. xviii. 32.). He hates sin, and wills its destruction; but that which He made in us He hates not, but wills its being and continuance. See Deut. ix. 28, 29.

25. For how could anything continue in being, unless it was His will to sustain it? Or how could it be kept from perishing, unless His word called it to live? "The same power which first gave being unto all things, continueth the same being unto all." "In Him we live and move and exist" (Neh. ix. 6. Acts xvii. 25, 28.).

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26 But ⁱthou sparest all: for they are thine, O ⁱ ch. 12. 16.
Lord, thou lover of souls.

CHAPTER XII.

2 God did not destroy those of Canaan all at once. 12 If he had done so, who could controul him? 19 But by sparing them he taught us. 23 They were punished with their gods.

FOR thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things.
2 Therefore chastenest thou them by little and little that offend, and warnest them by putting them in remembrance wherein they have offended, that leaving their wickedness they may believe on thee, O Lord.

3 For it was thy will to destroy by the hands of

26. "But thou sparest all: for they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls." All souls are His (Ezek. xviii. 4.), and all experience His love. He sends His rain upon the just and the unjust, and is kind to the unthankful and evil (St. Matt. v. 45. St. Luke vi. 35.). He showed Himself as a "soul-lover" when He spared Nineveh, and refused to execute His threatened judgment upon the city (Jonah iii. 10; iv. 11.). Esau was blessed after Jacob, that it might be seen how His mercies overflow upon the unworthy. If, in a lower sense, all souls are objects of His love, how great must be His love for those souls who are His jewels, bound up in the bundle of life, precious as the apple of His eye; those true members of His beloved Son, of whom the Saviour said, "Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." See 1 Sam. xxv. 29. Zech. ii. 8. Mal. iii. 17. St. John xvii. 23.

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1. "For the incorruptible Spirit, the immortal breath of the Creator, "which first inspired man with a living soul, is still in all men." They are the souls which He has made (Is. lvii. 16.), and He is the God and Father of the spirits of all flesh (Num. xvi. 22. Job xxxiii. 4.). He is the God of the heathen as well as the Jews (Rom. iii. 29.), and they are all His offspring (Acts xvii. 28.). God's special providence over a portion of the human race excluded not His universal care for all the souls that He created.

2. Since, then, it is His will to spare and not to destroy, He reproofs offenders by little chastisements; not sending down fire upon them from heaven to consume them at once, but correcting them by degrees; warning the many by the example of the few, as He warned all the inhabitants of Canaan by the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; and even in the ordinary scourges of famine, drought, and hostile invasion punishing some and sparing others, that the survivors might be awed into repentance. See Amos iv. 7, 8, 11. St. Luke xiii. 1—5. Men are also reminded of their sins by the relation of the evil which they suffer to the evil which they have done, and this leads them to forsake their wickedness and to believe in God. (see xi. 16.).

3—6. Thus God dealt even with the ancient inhabitants of the Holy Land, whom He abhorred for their detestable sorceries and impious

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² Or, *ancient*. our fathers both those ² old inhabitants of thy holy land,

4 whom thou hatedst for doing most odious works of ³ witchcrafts, and wicked sacrifices;

³ Or, *sorceries*.
^a ch. 14. 23.

5 and also ^a those merciless murderers of children, and devourers of man's flesh, and the feasts of blood,

^b Deut. 12. 31. 6 with their priests out of the midst of their idolatrous crew, and the parents, ^b that killed with their own hands souls destitute of help:

7 that the land, which thou esteemedst above all other, might receive a worthy ⁴ colony of God's children.

⁴ Or, *new*
inhabitation.

8 Nevertheless even those thou sparedst as men, and didst send ^c wasps, forerunners of thine host, to destroy them by little and little.

^c Ex. 23. 28.
Deut. 7. 20.
Josh. 24. 12.

9 Not that thou wast unable to bring the ungodly under the hand of the righteous in battle, or to destroy them at once with cruel beasts, or with one rough word:

rites (Lev. xviii. 24—28. Deut. xii. 29—31; xviii. 9—14.); and chiefly because they slew their children without pity in sacrifices to Molech, making a cannibal feast of human flesh and of blood,—an atrocious crime out of which their votaries made a religious festivity (the Greek text here is corrupt, and the meaning doubtful); whilst parents became themselves murderers of the souls that were in helpless dependence upon them; a race whom God decreed to destroy by the hands of our fathers. See Deut. xx. 16—18.

7. Since the land of Canaan was in His sight the most precious of all lands, a region of great beauty and fertility, upon which He poured His benefits in the largest measure (Deut. xi. 12; xxxii. 13, 14.), it was His purpose to purify it from the pollutions of the Canaanites, and to plant in it a worthy colony of His children, who should honour Him by their worship and service, and the observance of His laws. See Deut. iv. 37—40. Ps. cv. 43—45.

8. Yet, even in the case of the Canaanites, God's justice was tempered with mercy; He dealt with them as with men, reprieving them for four generations (Gen. xv. 16.); and when the time for the execution of His sentence was come, He sent the hornet before the armies of Israel (Exod. xxiii. 28—30. Deut. vii. 20, *note*), and He drove their enemies out by little and little, not only for His people's sake, lest the wild beasts should multiply against them, but also for their own sake, to delay the time of vengeance to the utmost. The hornet is mentioned especially in connection with the victories over Sihon and Og (see Josh. xxiv. 8, 12.).

9. This was not owing to any defect of power in God: for He could have given the wicked into subjection to the righteous, when they were

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10 but executing thy judgments upon them by little and little, thou gavest them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they were a naughty generation, and that their malice was bred in them, and that their cogitation would never be changed.

11 For it was a ^dcursed seed from the beginning; ^d Gen. 9. 25. neither didst thou for fear of any man give them pardon for those things wherein they sinned.

12 For who shall say, ^e What hast thou done? ^e Rom. 9. 20.

arrayed in battle against them; or He might have delivered them to be the prey of terrible wild beasts, or by a word of severity He might have destroyed them in a moment. Such was His word to Moses, in Num. xvi. 45, "Get you up from among this congregation, that I may "consume them as in a moment."

10. But instead of this, He judged them by little and little, that He might give them a place of repentance, though He knew that they were corrupt from their birth, and that wickedness infected their very nature, and that their disposition would never be changed. Sin is like a malignant disease which is spread by infection; inclinations to vice are inherited by children from their parents, as Adam bequeathed a sinful nature to his posterity. The children of sinners are children of wrath (Ps. lviii. 3. Eph. ii. 3.), until they are renewed by God's grace. Hence there may have been mercy even in the command to Joshua to exterminate the race, including infants and sucklings (Deut. ii. 34; xx. 16.), for if they had survived, they would have corrupted themselves and others. "The infant who is innocent of actual sin, yet being born in "sin, has in him the weakness and ignorance which is the seed of "future evil and misery;" and being not guiltless before God, he needs a Saviour for his healing and forgiveness. If the bondage of original sin is so grievous, how much worse is that of habitual sin, concerning which it is said, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jer. xiii. 23.).

11. The seed of Canaan was cursed of old for the sin of Ham, the father of Canaan (Gen. ix. 25.); and God could not be moved by the dread of any man to grant them impunity in their sin. No fear or partiality can pervert the strictness of His judgment (see Job xxii. 4.). This passage was quoted in the controversy with the Pelagians, as illustrating the doctrine of original sin, showing that there is an inborn guilt or defect in the children of Adam, besides that which they contract by the contagion of evil examples. Yet a daughter of Canaan was accepted by our Saviour (St. Matt. xv. 21—28.), and those who boasted of their descent from Abraham, had no part with him because of their moral likeness to Canaan (Susanna 56.), or to the great Deceiver himself (St. John viii. 39—44.). The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (Gen. viii. 21.), and in some the natural disposition is more depraved than in others, but God's grace is able to draw souls of every race to Himself.

12—14. "Who can reason with God, or hinder Him, saying, What "doest Thou? (Job ix. 12, 14.) Who can resist His judgment? Who "shall dare to lay anything to His charge for the destruction of the

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or who shall withstand thy judgment? or who shall accuse thee for the nations that perish, whom thou hast made? or who shall come to stand ² against thee, to be ³ revenged for the unrighteous men?

² Or, in thy presence.

³ Or, a revenger.

^f ch. 6. 7.

¹ Pet. 5. 7.

13 For neither is there any God but thou that ^f careth for all, to whom thou mightest shew that thy judgment is not unright.

14 Neither shall king or tyrant be able to set his face against thee for any whom thou hast punished.

^z Job 10. 2.

15 Forsomuch then as thou art righteous thyself, thou orderest all things righteously: ^z thinking it not agreeable with thy power to condemn him that hath not deserved to be punished.

^h ch. 11. 26.

16 For thy power is the beginning of righteousness, and ^h because thou art the Lord of all, it maketh thee to be gracious unto all.

17 For when men will not believe that thou art ⁴ Or, perfect. of a ⁴ full power, thou shewest thy strength, and

"nations who were created by Him? Or who shall come before Him to plead for the wicked? He is the only God, and all are under His care; there is no other god beside Him, that He should justify Himself, or prove that He judges righteously. Nor is there any king or tyrant who can set his face against God for His destruction of the ungodly." See Deut. xxxii. 39. Ps. li. 4. Is. xlv. 5, 6, 18, 21, 22. Rom. iii. 4. All men are in His hands as the clay is in the hands of the potter (Is. lxiv. 8.). The pleading of Abraham could not save Sodom, and even His own people reached a depth of wickedness for which the petitions of Noah, Daniel, and Job would have availed nothing (Jer. vii. 16; xi. 14; xiv. 11. Ezek. xiv. 14.). That men might not presume upon His favour, He said in His wrath that He had no need of Israel, and that if they perished in their guilt, He would make of Moses a great nation (Exod. xxxii. 10. Num. xiv. 11, 12.).

15—17. God is righteous, and disposes all things in righteousness; it is therefore impossible for Him to condemn the guiltless who ought not to be punished. His power is the exaltation of righteousness, and His universal dominion makes Him deal mercifully with all. When He manifests His might, it is because men will not believe in the perfection of His power, that He may convict of presumption those who know Him, and yet fear not to offend Him, "because His sentence against evil works is not executed speedily" (Eccles. viii. 11.). "God loves truth and sincere dealing, because He Himself is true and just. That veracity which is coeternal to His essence, includes an everlasting enmity to treachery, fraud, or perjury, and can never approve of wrong or oppression." His power is unlimited, and nothing is too hard for Him (St. Luke i. 37.); but it is impossible for Him to deceive or to be deceived, because it is contrary to His nature (Heb. vi. 18.). "That the righteous should be as the wicked, this is far from Him" (Gen. xviii. 25.). The atonement which Christ accomplished by His

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among them that know it thou makest their boldness manifest.

18 But thou, mastering thy power, judgest with equity, and orderest us with great favour: for thou mayest use power when thou wilt.

19 But by such works hast thou taught thy people that the just man should be merciful, and hast made thy children to be of a good hope that thou givest repentance for sins.

20 For if ^{i Rom. 9. 22.} thou didst punish the enemies of thy children, and the condemned to death, with such deliberation, giving them time and place, whereby they might be delivered from their malice:

21 with how great circumspection didst thou judge thine own sons, unto whose fathers thou hast sworn, and made covenants of good promises?

death, when our sins were laid upon Him, was perfected in His resurrection, which declared His righteousness, and God's acceptance of His merits. So the sufferings of the righteous are not their condemnation but the occasion of their reward.

18, 19. Being then mighty in power, God judges with forbearance, and deals with us with much longsuffering; for though He can act when He wills, it is His purpose to teach us by His example, that the just man should be merciful; and to give His sons good hopes of pardon, because He grants repentance after sin. Thus it was His will to spare Nineveh, because when He is provoked, He is patient; His wrath is not hasty like man's wrath. He says, "Do they provoke Me to anger?" (Jer. vii. 19.). He will not suffer His whole displeasure to arise, even when we have sinned grievously against Him (Ps. lxxviii. 38, 39; ciii. 10, 14.). "Though men requite God's goodness with wickedness and "despite, yet the greatness of His majesty never sways Him to sudden "revenge. Man is weak and corrupt, and hastens to execute his threats, "for fear of interference." Unlike our angry and vindictive passions, the Divine justice is tranquil and not wrathful; for "the irresistible "strength of God's Almighty power is an immovable pillar of moderation and merciful forbearance." So, though He is able to do whatsoever pleases Him (Ps. cxxxv. 6.), He has patience with us, that we may learn to show the same indulgence to others that we have experienced at His hands (St. Matt. xviii. 33. Eph. iv. 32.).

20, 21. For if the Canaanites, who were the enemies of God's children, and under sentence of death, were not punished until God had watched over them, and, as it were, entreated them to repent (see 2 Cor. v. 20; vi. 1.), giving them time and opportunity to forsake their wickedness, how much more would He use discretion in judging His own sons, with whose fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He had established His covenant by oath (Gen. xxii. 16—18. Ps. cv. 9—11.), to assure them of His good promise! (Rom. iii. 1, 2; ix. 4, 5.). Thus God would have spared Sodom, if there had been ten righteous in the city, and He often

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22 Therefore, whereas thou dost chasten us, thou scourgest our enemies a thousand times more, to the intent that, when we judge, we should carefully think of thy goodness, and when we ourselves are judged, we should look for mercy.

23 Wherefore, whereas men have lived dissolutely and unrighteously, ^k thou hast tormented them with their own ² abominations.

^k ch. 11. 16.
& 16. 1.
² Or, *abominable idols*.
¹ ch. 11. 15.
Rom. 1. 23.

24 ¹ For they went astray very far in the ways of error, and held them for gods, which even among the beasts of their enemies were despised, being deceived, as children of no understanding.

25 Therefore unto them, as to children without the use of reason, thou didst send a judgment to mock them.

26 But they that would not be reformed by that correction, wherein he dallied with them, shall feel a judgment worthy of God.

27 For, look, for what things they grudged, when they were punished, that is, for them whom they

deferred the time of vengeance upon the vessels of wrath for the sake of the few amongst them who by repentance might become vessels of mercy, and spared the unbelievers on account of the remnant that were faithful (Rom. xi. 5.).

22. It is for our instruction that God inflicts these manifold plagues upon our enemies, that in our judgment of others we may be careful to imitate His goodness, and that when we are judged, we may look for mercy. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusteth in "the Lord, mercy shall compass him about" (Ps. xxxii. 10.).

23, 24. It was according to this method of deliberate chastisement that God punished the wicked who spent their lives in sin and folly; they were tormented through their own abominations. For they fell further and further from the truth, taking for their gods animals which, even in comparison with other beasts, were accounted by their enemies as contemptible and unclean (Lev. xi. 41, 43.), and erring like foolish children. According to the Targum on Gen. xxi. 9, the child Ishmael was cast out for making idols in childish sport, and thus idolatry was often denounced as childish or frivolous.

25, 26. Therefore in their punishment they were exposed to scorn, as children without understanding (as when they were scared by imaginary terrors, by Gideon's pitchers, Judg. vii. 20—22; or the waving of the mulberry trees, 2 Sam. v. 24; or a supposed noise of chariots, 2 Kin. vii. 6, 14, 15. Ps. liii. 5.); but those who will not take warning from these sportive likenesses of rebuke, shall feel a judgment worthy of God.

27. For the vexation which they felt at these petty chastisements which befell them through their gods, constrained them to acknowledge the true God whom they once denied; thus they incurred the extreme

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thought to be gods; [now] being punished in them, when they saw it, they acknowledged him to be the true God, whom before they denied to know; and therefore came extreme damnation upon them.

CHAPTER XIII.

¹ *They were not excused that worshipped any of God's works. 10 But most wretched are they that worship the works of men's hands.*

SURELY vain are all men by nature, who are ignorant of God, and ^a could not out of the good ^a Rom. 1. 19, 20. things that are seen know him that is: neither by considering the works did they acknowledge the workmaster;

2 ^b but deemed either fire, or wind, or the swift ^b Deut. 4. 19, & 17. 3. air, or the circle of the stars, or the violent water, or the lights of heaven, to be the gods which govern the world.

sentence of condemnation, because they had defied Him, and persisted in their idolatry. This may be illustrated from the conduct of the Philistines, when they were plagued with mice and boils for retaining the ark; they resolved not to harden their hearts, but to take warning from Pharaoh and the Egyptians (1 Sam. vi. 6.). "The judgment that 'now is'" (St. John iii. 18.), may, if rightly regarded, be the means by which the sinner may escape the greater judgment that shall be hereafter.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. For vanity and superstition are natural to all men who live in ignorance of the true God (on the "vanity" of the heathen, see Rom. i. 21. Eph. iv. 17.). The goodness and beauty of the visible world should have led them to the knowledge of "Him who is," the Being who is the source of all existence, whose Name was announced to be "I am that I am" (Exod. iii. 14.); who "is, and was, and is to come" (Rev. i. 8.); but they could not perceive Him, nor would they so reflect upon the works as to acknowledge the Author who designed them. "For 'this end life is given to us in our present state, that the knowledge 'of visible things which is gained through our senses may be our souls' 'guide to the knowledge of things that are invisible.'" God has given us eyes to see and admire the beauty of His works, and the faculty of reason that we may perceive His design in them.

2. This dulness led the heathen to worship the powers of nature, accounting as gods or rulers of the world the fire or the atmosphere (whether it was regarded as the breath of life, or as a power operating in the swift motions of the winds); or the heavens, the sphere in which the stars are seen; or the sea, on account of the force of its waves (hence the sea-god of the Greeks was called the "Earth-shaker"); or the sun and moon, as the two great lights in the firmament of heaven. "The heathen in their blindness were unable to perceive the Supreme Ruler of all, but ascribed the causes of things to these inferior essences." "The error that has seized the greater part of man-

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3 With whose beauty if they being delighted took them to be gods; let them know how much better the Lord of them is: for the first author of beauty hath created them.

"kind is the worship of the four elements as deities; and thus they erred on a matter in which truth most needs to be imprinted on the mind. Others worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, the universe, or the heaven; but the King and Parent of all, the Ancient of days, the Lord of hosts, the Pilot whose hand guides and directs the whole frame for good, was hidden from their eyes" (*Philo*). Thus, fire was worshipped in Persia, Arabia, and the East; and because of the great use of fire in converting metals to man's use, the Greeks and Romans worshipped Vulcan as the god of fire. The air and rain of heaven were supposed to be the realm of Jupiter and Juno; the earth was worshipped under the name of Demeter, Ceres, Pluto, and Proserpine; Neptune was worshipped as the god of the sea. The sun was worshipped in Egypt, at Bethshemesh or Heliopolis (Jer. xliii. 13.); the moon as Artemis or Diana. The stars and host of heaven were objects of worship to the Phœnicians (Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3. 2 Kin. xvii. 16; xxi. 3.).

3—5. "If it was from delight in their beauty that they supposed them to be gods, should they not have acknowledged the superior beauty of the Lord of all? For the Author and Parent of all beauty created them. If they were amazed at the power or the forces that were at work in them, should they not have understood from them the superior power of Him who framed them? For the more we perceive of the grandeur and beauty of created things, the more we know of the perfection of the Parent and Author of them all."

Several ancient writers speak of the excessive admiration of the beauties of nature as one of the causes of idolatry or creature worship. One says: "Instead of finding out God in the beauty of His works, they were lost in admiration of the universe, losing sight of the Creator in the splendour of the visible creation. Some things, as water, air, and fire, they worshipped, because human life depends upon them for its subsistence. Sometimes beauty enchanted them, so that they regarded as Divine even the work of the sculptor or the monuments of the dead." "The Divine essence being inaccessible to them, and invisible, they mistook for God whatever was sublime or glorious in creation. These created powers, magnitudes, and beauties, absorbed their attention; they paused there, and discovered not the Creator." The Psalmist says, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches." But what is the wise saying of the unbelievers, when we recount these wonders to them,—the magnitude, extent, and beauty of the creation, its great profusion and abundance in all things? They reply: It is because the world was made so fair and great that we have deified it. In our amazement at its vast extent, and our admiration of its beauty, we conceived that it was God. We answer, How is it then that we Christians have not deified the world? Have we not gazed at it with the same eyes? Do we not enjoy nature as they do? Are we not in possession of a soul like theirs? Have

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4 But if they were astonished at their power and virtue, let them understand by them, how much mightier he is that made them.

5 ^c For by the greatness and beauty of the crea- ^c Rom. i. 20.
tures proportionably the maker of them is seen.

6 But yet for this they are the less to be blamed: for they peradventure err, seeking God, and desirous to find him.

7 For being ^d conversant in his works they ² search ^d Rom. i. 21.
him diligently, and believe their sight: because the ² Or, seek.
things are beautiful that are seen.

8 Howbeit neither are they to be pardoned.

we not a body like theirs? Do we not walk on the same earth? Their error is therefore due to another cause. "That which is known of God is manifest to them; for God hath showed it to them: but when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful" (Rom. i. 19, 21, 22.).

The heavens declare the glory of God to every speech and language of mankind (Ps. xix. 1, 3.) Their greatness exhibits His power; their beauty His wisdom. He is the greatest of the great, the loveliest of the lovely. If the work exceeds our apprehension, much more the Designer of it; if the world has the glory of an ornament, how great must be the splendour of the Divine Maker of it! for He is the original cause of all that is beautiful, the source whence all excellence of form, all lustre and brightness proceeds. From Him they derive that order by which the several parts of the universe are adapted to each other, and form one harmonious whole. He has impressed His own character upon them, whilst He continues ever the same, as the seal is unimpaired, whilst it imparts its form to the various substances to which it is applied. So the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator are clearly seen (Rom. i. 20.), for the universe has received the impress of them. Its various parts cohere together, the different natures retaining the different properties which He gave them, and yet conspiring for the end for which He made them.

The Creator is also known "proportionably" to the greatness and beauty of the creature. His wisdom and power appear so much the greater as we obtain a larger survey of His works. As we trace the succession of cause and effect, "the dependence of the inferior existences upon the higher ones leads us to acknowledge one supreme and independent Being upon whom all the rest depend."

6, 7. "But they are not so much to be blamed for these errors, for they perhaps fell into them whilst they were seeking after God, and desired to find Him. They studied His works, not merely for their own advantage, or to please themselves, but in a diligent search for truth; and they are informed by their senses of the beauty of the visible world." The meaning is, that the admiration of the powers of nature was not the worst form of heathen error; for they did well to seek after God, and to enquire for Him in His works.

8, 9. "But though some excuse may be found for them, they

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9 For if they were able to know so much, that they could aim at the world; how did they not sooner find out the Lord thereof?

^e ver. 18.
ch. 15. 17.
^f Ps. 115. 4.
& 135. 15.

10 But miserable are they, and in ^e dead things is their hope, who called them gods, ^f which are the works of men's hands, gold and silver, to shew art in, and resemblances of beasts, or a stone good for nothing, the work of an ancient hand.

^g Is. 44. 13, &c.
Jer. 10. 3, &c.
² Or, *timberwright*.

11 ^g Now a ² carpenter that felleth timber, after he hath sawn down a tree meet for the purpose, and taken off all the bark skilfully round about, and hath wrought it handsomely, and made a vessel thereof fit for the service of man's life;

"cannot be wholly pardoned. For if their powers of mind sufficed them for forming a judgment on the constitution of the world, how was it that the knowledge which they gained did not quicken their apprehension of Him who is the Lord of the universe?" This may be applied not only to the errors of idolatry, but also to the false philosophy of atheism and pantheism, which would either wholly exclude the thought of God, and His works in creation and providence, from its investigation of natural laws and the origin of things, or would speculate amiss concerning Him, regarding Him not as a living personal Creator, but as the soul of the universe. Thus it is still found that "the world by wisdom knows not God;" the highest secular enlightenment and the greatest devotion to physical science often leads men away from the apprehension of those truths which it most concerns them to know. See St. Matt. xi. 25. 1 Cor. i. 19—21.

10. "The heathen are therefore miserable, and put their trust in things that are dead and lifeless, because they give the name of gods to the works of men's hands, to gold and silver, the industrious contrivance of art, to images of animals, or to a useless block of stone, curiously shaped by some ancient workman." The heathen were dead, both because they trusted in dead things, and because they were estranged from God who is the life of the soul (Eph. iv. 18.). Their idols, which they wrongly called gods, were mere nothings (1 Cor. viii. 4, 5.). Some of them were sculptures of animals, like the calves of Aaron and Jeroboam, the fish-shaped Dagon of the Philistines, or the bulls and lions of Nineveh. Other forms are referred to by Moses in Deut. iv. 16—18. They were made to represent the powers of nature in the earth, air, or sea.

11—16. "Or some wood-carver or carpenter cleaves a suitable tree, and skilfully strips off all its bark, and produces by his craft a vessel neatly shaped" (see Bar. vi. 59.), "and adapted for the common uses of life. Then he uses up the chips of his work to dress his food, and satisfies his hunger" (this is taken from Is. xl. 20; xlv. 13—20.). "But the remainder, which is of no use for any other purpose, being a crooked log, with knots growing out of it, he takes for his amusement in his idle hours, and carves it into a human

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12 and after spending the ² refuse of his work ² Or, *chips*.
to dress his meat, hath filled himself;

13 and taking the very refuse among those which served to no use, being a crooked piece of wood, and full of knots, hath carved it diligently, when he had nothing else to do, and formed it by the skill of his understanding, and fashioned it to the image of a man;

14 or made it like some vile beast, laying it over with vermilion, and with paint colouring it red, and covering every spot therein;

15 and ^h when he had made a convenient room ^h Is. 46. 7.
for it, set it in a wall, and made it fast with iron:

16 for he provided for it that it might not fall, knowing that it was unable to help itself; for it is an image, and hath need of help:

17 ⁱ then maketh he prayer for his goods, for his ⁱ Is. 41. 17, 19.
wife and children, and is not ashamed to speak to that which hath no life.

18 For health he calleth upon that which is weak: for life prayeth to that ^k which is dead: for ^k ver. 10.
aid humbly beseecheth ³ that which hath least means ³ Gr. *that hath no experience at all.*
to help: and for a good journey he asketh of that which cannot set a foot forward:

19 and for gaining and getting, and for good success of his hands, asketh ability to do of him, that is most unable to do any thing.

“shape by the aid of his experience as a craftsman; or he makes “the likeness of some contemptible animal, smearing it with vermilion, and daubing it with red colour, and covering every spot “that is in it. He then makes a suitable shelf for it in the wall” (Bar. vi. 27; like the household shrines for Diana in Acts xix. 24.), “and secures it in its place with iron. He takes this precaution to “prevent it from falling, for he knows that it cannot help itself; for “it is a mere image, and requires support.” The same thing is said of Baal, in Judg. vi. 31; of Chemosh, in Jer. xlviii. 7; of the Egyptian idols, in Jer. xliii. 12; of Bel and the other idols of Babylon, in Is. xlvi. 1, 2. Bar. vi. 12, 57, 58. So Dagon could not save himself from falling (1 Sam. v. 3.).

17—19. “And when he has any request to make concerning his “goods, or his marriage, or his children, he is not ashamed to address “his prayer to this lifeless trunk” (see Jer. ii. 26—28.). “For health “he calls upon the weak, and for life he worships the dead; for help “he supplicates a thing most impotent; on the subject of a journey “he invokes a thing that cannot move a step from its place” (in Ps.

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CHAPTER XIV.

¹ *Though men do not pray to their ships, 5 yet are they saved rather by them than by their idols. 8 Idols are accursed, and so are the makers of them. 14 The beginning of idolatry, 23 and the effects thereof. 30 God will punish them that swear falsely by their idols.*

AGAIN, one preparing himself to sail, and about to pass through the raging waves, calleth upon a piece of wood more rotten than the ² vessel that carrieth him.

² Or, ship.

³ Or, vessel,
or, ship.

2 For verily desire of gain devised ³ that, and the workman built it by his skill.

cxv. 7, it is said of the idols, feet have they, and walk not; so they have mouths and speak not, for they are "dumb," 1 Cor. xii. 2. Elijah said of Baal ironically, "he is pursuing, or he is in a journey," 1 Kin. xviii. 27.); "and when he seeks dexterity and ability for "securing profit in business or success in handiwork, he makes application to a thing that is most feeble and powerless." The reference here is not so much to the public worship of idols in the heathen temples as to the household gods, called by the Romans Lares or Penates; idols that were kept as guardians of domestic peace, or protectors of household stuff and furniture. Hence it was the custom to sacrifice to them on the hearth. Such also were the images of Laban (Gen. xxxi. 34.), and the teraphim in 1 Sam. xix. 13. Judg. xvii. 5.).

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1. The author, having spoken of the folly of "household gods," passes on to the subject of "nautical idols." The Phœnician mariners placed their idols in the prows of their vessels; they were called "pataci," and each ship was dedicated to some deity, and placed under his protection. The Greeks and Romans had their tutelary deities painted or otherwise represented in the sterns of their vessels. Sometimes they were of some costly material, as ivory, but they were more often rude paintings on the hulks. The sign or figure-head of a ship, from which it was named, was sometimes the representation of a god, as in the case of the Alexandrian vessel in Acts xxviii. 11, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. Another ship is described as having "Isis" on both sides as its name. The mariners in Jonah i. 4, 5, invoked "every one his god," addressing probably the images which they had on board.

1—3. "Another man is preparing for a voyage, and is about to "traverse the rough waves, and he loudly invokes the aid of an idol "of wood, which is more rotten than the ship in which he is to sail. "For it is not the idol, but the ship that contributes to his safety, "since the merchant in his desire of gain carefully designed it, using "every precaution against the loss of his merchandise, and constructing "it with the skill which wisdom imparts; but this would be no sufficient security without the Providence of the Father of all, which directs "its course in the sea, and makes a safe path for it through the waves."

The wisdom or skill of the mariner and the industry of the hus-

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3 But thy providence, O Father, governeth it: for thou ^a hast made a way in the sea, and a safe ^a Ex. 14. 22. path in the waves;

4 shewing that thou canst save from all danger: yea, though a man went to sea without art.

5 Nevertheless thou wouldest not that the works of thy wisdom should be idle, and therefore do men commit their lives to a small piece of wood, and passing the rough sea in a weak vessel are saved.

6 ^b For in the old time also, when the proud giants ^b Gen. 6. 4.
& 7. 18, 21,
22. perished, the hope of the world governed by thy hand escaped in a weak vessel, and left to all ages a seed of generation.

7 For blessed is the wood whereby righteousness cometh.

8 But ^c that which is made with hands is cursed, ^c Ps. 115. 8.
Bar. 6. 4.

bandman are alike means by which human life is sustained; but both are dependent upon God: man goeth forth to his work and to his labour, but God gives the increase. He provides for the beasts by nature, and for man by prospering the work of his hands, or by watching over him in the perils of the sea (Ps. civ. 21, 23, 27.).

4, 5. For God has shown, by leading His people through the Red Sea, and other deliverances, that He can preserve men from every peril, and give them a safe passage over the waters without the aid of human art or skill. But it is His will that the wisdom which He imparts to man should not be concealed for want of use, and therefore it teaches them to contrive little vessels of wood to which they entrust their lives, sometimes effecting a safe passage over the waves in a small raft, roughly and hastily constructed.

6. So of old, when the proud giants (the Nephilim of Gen. vi. 4.) perished in the Deluge, and the mercy of God spared Noah and his sons, and the beasts and fowls that were with them (for these were the hope of the world, whereby the races were preserved from extinction), His hand directed them to find refuge in a weak vessel, that they might leave a posterity to the world.

7. God's blessing was upon the wood of the ark, and by it righteousness prevailed, for it was the saving of the righteous, when the wicked perished. This wood typified the wood of the cross, which being accursed in the Law (Gal. iii. 13.), changed the curse into a blessing, by cancelling the handwriting that was against us, and bringing in everlasting righteousness through the justification of sinners.

8. But the wood which is made into an idol is accursed with its maker. For God's Law pronounces a curse upon the maker of idols (Deut. xxvii. 15.), and also declares the graven image itself to be a "cursed thing" (Deut. vii. 25, 26.), because though in itself it is worthless and contemptible, it has been called a god, and has

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as well it, as he that made it: he, because he made it; and it, because, being corruptible, it was called god.

^d Ps. 5. 5. 9 ^d For the ungodly and his ungodliness are both alike hateful unto God.

10 For that which is made shall be punished together with him that made it.

^e See Is. 46. 1. 11 Therefore ^e even ² upon the idols of the Gentiles shall there be a visitation: because in the creature of God they are become an abomination, and ^f ³ stumblingblocks to the souls of men, and a ⁴ snare to the feet of the unwise.

^e See Is. 46. 1.
Jer. 46. 25.
& 49. 3.

² Or, to, or, by.
Jer. 10. 8.

Hab. 2. 18.

³ Gr. scandala.

⁴ Or, trap.

^g ver. 27.

12 For ^g the devising of idols was the beginning of *spiritual* fornication, and the invention of them the corruption of life.

thus defrauded the Creator of the honour that is due to Him. Idols are called "corruptible," to denote their unfitness to be compared to the incorruptible God (Rom. i. 22, 23.).

9, 10. For he who does wickedly, and his wickedness, are alike hateful to God. Though God cannot hate the nature which He has made (See xi. 24, 25.), He abhors the evil which pollutes it, and will not justify the wicked (Exod. xxiii. 7.), or hold him guiltless, for "the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Is. iii. 11.). Therefore when the idols shall be destroyed, the idol-maker shall also be punished (Is. ii. 18, 20, 21.).

11. The idols of the heathen shall therefore be visited with judgment; for though they are made from materials which are created by God, they are perverted to be abominations, and to be stumblingblocks to men's souls, and snares to entrap the feet of the foolish. Hence the Israelites were to abhor even the gold and silver ornaments upon the heathen idols, lest the snare of covetousness should entangle them in the snare of idolatry, and thus involve them in ruin. See Deut. vii. 25. Exod. xxiii. 33. Ps. cvi. 36. All God's good gifts become stumblingblocks to men, if they draw away their affections from the Giver of all good (Ps. lxxix. 22.).

12. For when men devised and invented idols, they began to commit fornication against God (Ps. lxxiii. 27.). They provoked Him to jealousy by going a whoring after other gods (see Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16. Deut. xxxi. 16; xxxii. 16, 21.), and broke His covenant. This error was the more deadly, because it was the corruption of religion, which should have been the life of their souls. The sin of apostasy, or falling away from the true God, is often called "fornication" in Scripture, as in Ezek. xvi. 26, &c. Jer. iii. 1. An ancient writer calls idolatry "the sister of fornication," referring to Num. xxv. 1, 2. In the parable, the state of the heathen is represented by the prodigal "devouring his living with harlots," idolatry being "spiritual fornication," and opening the door to all manner of lasciviousness.

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13 For neither were they from the beginning, neither shall they be for ever.

14 For by the vain glory of men they entered into the world, and therefore shall they come shortly to an end.

15 For a father afflicted with untimely mourning, when he hath made an image of his child soon taken away, now honoured him as a god, which was then a dead man, and delivered to those that were under him ceremonies and sacrifices.

16 Thus ²in process of time an ungodly custom ²Gr. in time. grown strong was kept as a law, and graven images were worshipped by the commandments of ³kings. ³Or, tyrants.

17 Whom men could not honour ⁴in presence, ⁴Or, in sight.

13. And as the ancient world had no idols, because the memory of the Creator was fresh in the minds of mankind, so there shall be a time when idolatry shall be extirpated from the earth. This might be inferred from Is. ii. 18. Ezek. xxx. 13. Micah v. 13. Zech. xiii. 2. An ancient writer observes that even Antichrist will utterly abhor idols (2 Thess. ii. 4.).

14. One of the chief causes of idolatry at its first entrance into the world was man's ambition, which led to the worship of heroes and kings after their death. Therefore, since it began in vain glory, its time is short, and it will come suddenly to an end.

15. Another cause of the making of idols was the inordinate sorrow for the dead. "A father bewailing his son who had been removed "by an untimely death, made an image of him, and honoured the "deceased as a god, and instituted rites and sacrifices amongst his "servants." Thus, it is said that the idolatry of Babylon began when Ninus erected an image of his son Bel. There is something idolatrous in excessive grief for the departed. Hence certain expressions of sorrow were prohibited to the Israelites in Lev. xix. 28; especially to the priests (Lev. xxi. 1—3.). The "marks" which the heathen "printed" on their bodies were letters expressing the name of an idol or person whom they wished to honour; and mourners may have solaced their grief in this way, as well as by clinging to an imaginary presence of the absent one in a statue or picture.

16, 17. "This ungodly custom gained strength in process of time, "until it was observed as a law, and the worship of carved images was "enjoined by the decrees of tyrants; and when men were unable to "pay homage to their king, because their abode was at a distance "from his court, they procured some representation of him from a "distance, and made a conspicuous image of him whom they desired "to honour. Thus they were diligent in their flattery of their prince, "even when they could not address it to him in person, on account "of his absence from them." Upon this Hooker observes, that "evil "custom smother the light of natural understanding; because men "will not bend their wits to examine whether things whereunto they

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because they dwelt far off, they took the counterfeit of his visage from far, and made an express image of a king whom they honoured, to the end that by this their forwardness they might flatter him that was absent, as if he were present.

18 Also the singular diligence of the artificer did help to set forward the ignorant to more superstition.

19 For he, peradventure willing to please one in authority, forced all his skill to make the resemblance ² of the best fashion.

² Gr. *to the better.*

20 And so the multitude, allured by the grace of the work, took him now for a god, which a little before was but honoured as a man.

21 And this was an occasion to deceive the world: for men, serving either calamity or tyranny, did

“have been accustomed are good or evil. So the senseless stupidity “of idolaters is imputed to custom. It was a custom which prevailed “and was kept as a law; the authority of rulers, the ambition of “craftsmen, and such like means, thrusting forward the ignorant and “increasing their superstition.” Thus the golden idol of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. iii. was probably an image of himself; and the Roman Emperor Caligula set up his image throughout the empire, intruding it even into the Temple at Jerusalem.

18—20. “And this idolatry prevailed the more among the ignorant, “through the ambition of the artist, who in the hope of gaining the “favour of the prince strove by his art to add beauty to the form “which he portrayed” (either in a spirit of rivalry with other artists, or desiring to produce what is commonly called “a flattering likeness”). “This elegance of the work induced the common people to make their “prince an object of religious worship, though they began by only “honouring him as a man.” Idols were rendered attractive by art, and hence they are called “delectable things” in Is. xlv. 9. The excessive flattery of princes as “benefactors” during their life, frequently led to the religious veneration of them after death.

21. “Thus men were ensnared through the concerns of their life. “Some fell into the error after a calamity or bereavement” (above, ver. 15.), “and others out of servile respect for their rulers; and “thus they ascribed to images of wood or stone the incommunicable “Name of the Deity.” The incommunicable Name includes those attributes and powers which belong exclusively to the One true God, who is above all and through all and in all. The heathen in their polytheism distributed these attributes among a variety of deities; for when they pretended that any of their gods possessed supreme power over a portion of nature or the affairs of nations, they defrauded the true King of kings of a part of the honour which is His alone, and cannot be shared with any other. See Hos. ii. 8. Deut. iv. 39; vi. 4. Is. xlv. 6, 14; xlv. 9.

ascribe unto stones and stocks the incommunicable
² name.

² Or, of God.

22 Moreover this was not enough for them, that they erred in the knowledge of God; but whereas they lived in the great war of ignorance, those so great plagues called they peace.

23 For whilst they ^b slew their children in sacrifices, or used secret ceremonies, or made revellings of strange rites;

^b Deut. 18. 10.
 Jer. 7. 9.
 & 19. 4.
 ch. 12. 5, 6.

24 they kept neither lives nor marriages any longer undefiled: but either one slew another traiterously, or grieved him by adultery.

25 ⁱ So that there reigned in all men ³ without exception blood, manslaughter, theft, and dissimulation, corruption, unfaithfulness, tumults, perjury,

ⁱ Rom. 1. 29,
 &c.
³ Or,
 confusedly.

26 disquieting of good men, forgetfulness of good turns, defiling of souls, changing of ⁴ kind, disorder ⁴ Or, sex. in marriages, adultery, and shameless uncleanness.

22. "Then, as if this error was not sufficient, although their ignorance involved them in a condition of war, strife, and peril, and a multitude of evils, they called it peace." That is, they hoped for peace and safety by propitiating the demons whom they worshipped; but what peace could they have as long as they were in rebellion against their Maker, hateful, and hating one another? (Titus iii. 3. Rom. iii. 15—17.).

23, 24. "For in those religious rites in which they slew their children, or practised mysteries in secret, or revelled in frenzy after a strange manner, they gave themselves over to lasciviousness and cruelty, so that there was no security for life or conjugal fidelity, but one slew another by treachery, or grieved him by adultery." The worst abominations of heathenism were done in secret, in the dark, or "under the cliffs of the rocks" (Is. lvii. 5. Ezek. viii. 12.) The priestesses in the idol temples were often persons of profligate life (1los. iv. 14. Rev. xvii. 5.). Their rites, divinations, and oracles were accompanied by shameful orgies and indecent attitudes, by drunken revels or paroxysms of frenzy. Such were the abominable orgies of Bacchus, with which Antiochus Epiphanes profaned the Temple at Jerusalem (see 2 Macc. vi. 1—7.). Hence St. Peter speaks of the excesses and abominations of idolaters (1 Pet. iv. 3.). These were the unfruitful works of darkness which the light of the Gospel reproveth (Eph. v. 11—13.).

25, 26. "Thus they were involved in a mass of wickedness, in which all crimes are mingled together, bloodshed and murder, theft and fraud, corruption and unfaithfulness, discord and perjury, persecution of good men, forgetfulness of benefits, pollutions of souls, sins against nature, incests, adultery, and wantonness." Such is St. Paul's enumeration of the sins which result from idolatry (Rom. i. 29—31.).

^k Rom. 1.
25, 26.
² Gr.
nameless,
Ex. 23. 13.

27 ^k For the worshipping of idols ² not to be named is the beginning, the cause, and the end, of all evil.

28 For either they are mad when they be merry, or prophesy lies, or live unjustly, or else lightly forswear themselves.

29 For insomuch as their trust is in idols, which have no life; though they swear falsely, yet they look not to be hurt.

30 Howbeit for both causes shall they be justly punished: both because they thought not well of God, ³ giving heed unto idols, and also unjustly swore in deceit, despising holiness.

31 For it is not the power of them by whom they

27. "For the worship of abominable or nameless idols is the beginning, the cause, and the end of all evil." The idols are said to be "nameless," because of the law in Exod. xxiii. 13, "Make no mention of the name of other gods." "Idolatry," says Tertullian, "is the principal crime of mankind, the chief guilt of the world, the great cause of judgment. Other crimes seem to be merged in this one offence. To be an idolater is to be a homicide, a suicide who slays himself with the knife of his error and his rebellion against God. He is an adulterer, adulterating the truth. He is a thief, for he robs God, and adds insult to injury by conferring what is His due upon contemptible idols. Idolatrous ceremonies produce the pomp of ambition and the pride of apparel, and their feasts make men gluttons and drunkards." "Since idolatry was so sore a disease, it required the severest remedies, such as the plagues of Egypt, destructive floods, fire and sword, distress of nations, and signs of Divine wrath by land and sea." It was the parent of all manner of sin, and of all the evils that result from sin.

28, 29. "For their votaries either rave in their feasts, or prophesy falsely, or live unrighteously, or easily forswear themselves. For though they swear with evil intent, they expect no harm to follow, since they trust in lifeless idols." That is, though their oath pretends to acknowledge them as gods, they are confident that they are mere idols, and powerless to avenge the injury thus cast upon them.

30, 31. "Thus just vengeance shall overtake them for both offences: because they thought amiss about God in their regard to idols; and because they swore with a purpose of fraud and wrong, despising the obligation of their oath. For though the deities invoked in their oath have no power of vengeance, a just punishment always overtakes the transgression of the wicked who violate their solemn engagements." Such was the judgment upon Zedekiah for his perjury, in Ezek. xvii. 11—19, when he tampered with the enemies of the king of Babylon after swearing allegiance to him. "Fearful tokens of Divine vengeance have been known to overtake the mockers of religion, even when they blasphemed false gods; and this was taken

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swear: but it is the just vengeance of sinners, that punisheth always the offence of the ungodly.

CHAPTER XV.

1 We do acknowledge the true God. 7 The folly of idolmakers, 14 and of the enemies of God's people; 15 because, besides the idols of the Gentiles, 18 they worshipped vile beasts.

BUT thou, O God, art gracious and true, long-suffering, and in mercy ordering all things.

2 For if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy power: but we will not sin, knowing that we are counted thine.

3 For to know thee is perfect righteousness: yea, to know thy power is the root of immortality.

4 For neither did the mischievous invention of men deceive us, nor an image spotted with divers colours, the painter's fruitless labour;

5 the sight whereof ^{2 Or, turneth a reproach to the foolish.} enticeth fools to lust after it,

“for a proof that those gods had power to reward those who sought them, and to plague those who feared them not. In this they erred; for it was not the power of those by whom they swore, but the vengeance of their sin that punished the offenders. Yet they held rightly that perjury was a crime that called loudly for vengeance” (Hooker).

CHAPTER XV.

1—3. The honour which idolaters give to their pretended deities we ascribe to the true and supreme God, whose kindness, truth, long-suffering, and mercy we continually experience; for it is not withdrawn from us even when we sin, so long as we acknowledge His power, and live in fear of His displeasure. Therefore we will not forsake Him as the heathen do, who are not called by His Name (Is. lxiii. 19. Ps. cxix. 94.). Since we have known Him, we will glory in this (Jer. ix. 23, 24.), and not in worldly wisdom, riches, or honour. For the knowledge of God contains all righteousness, and it is the wisdom whereby we obtain immortality (viii. 13.). “It is contrary to man’s religious sense to worship idols of silver, gold, or wood, or even to take them for resemblances of the Deity. The reasonable soul casts away these pretended gods, and aspires to the love of its Maker. Thus it is drawn also to the love of Him who first proclaimed this truth to the heathen, and armed His disciples with Divine power to enforce it.” To know Him is perfect righteousness; for he is the true Corner Stone, elect and precious, and whoso believeth in Him shall not be confounded. Idolaters, on the other hand, shall be confounded for the vain objects of their worship (Is. i. 28, 29.).

4, 5. “This has kept us from the error of worshipping the devices of men’s evil art” (Acts xvii. 29.), “or the unprofitable work of the painter, a picture composed of various spots of colour” (xiii. 14.), which fools desire to their shame. For the object of their desire

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and so they desire the form of a dead image, that hath no breath.

6 Both they that make them, they that desire them, and they that worship them, are lovers of evil things, and are worthy to have such things to trust upon.

^a Rom. 9. 21. 7 For the ^a potter, tempering soft earth, fashioneth every vessel with much labour for our service : yea, of the same clay he maketh both the vessels that serve for clean uses, and likewise also all such as serve to the contrary : but what is the use of either sort, the potter himself is the judge.

8 And employing his labours lewdly, he maketh a vain god of the same clay, even he which a little before was made of earth himself, and within a little while after returneth to the same, out of the which ^b he was taken, when his ^b life which was lent him shall be demanded.

“is dead, for it can neither breathe nor speak” (Ps. cxxxv. 16, 17.). This is a strong protest against the worship of images and pictures, an abuse which was carefully avoided by the early Christian Church, for it was considered unlawful to give any kind of religious worship to sculptures or paintings, even under the pretext of honouring saints and martyrs. When the heathen worship was abolished in Alexandria the cross was depicted everywhere, but never with the human form upon it.

6. Such trust in idols is a blindness which is justly incurred by men who have pleasure in wickedness (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.); for such are those who make them and worship them.

7, 8. The author proceeds to speak of earthenware idols. The labour of the potter is described in Eccus. xxxviii. 29, 30. The Egyptians excelled in it, and it formed part of the labour imposed on the Israelites in their bondage (Exod. i. 14. Ps. lxxx. 6.). So the prophets used it as a familiar type of God's power over men, who are His vessels of clay (Is. xxix. 16; xlv. 9; lxiv. 8. Jer. xviii. 1—6. Rom. ix. 20, 21.), expressing both the power of the Creator and the freewill of man, since the marring of the vessel is due not to the will of the potter, but to a fault inherent in the clay. But the purpose of the author here is to show the contemptible nature of earthenware idols by comparing them to vessels shaped for mean and sordid uses. “When the potter presses the soft earth, and labours to fashion each vessel for our use, he makes out of the same lump utensils for clean purposes, and for the contrary, the clay-worker being the judge who decides the use of each; and with a misdirected industry he fashions a vain god from the same clay. Yet he was himself formed of earth, and soon returns to the earth out of which he was produced, and the soul which he has received is required of him” (St. Luke xii. 20.).

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9 Notwithstanding his care is, not that he shall
² have much labour, nor that his life is short: but ² Or, *be sick,*
 striveth to excel goldsmiths and silversmiths, and ^{or, die.}
 endeavoureth to do like the workers in brass, and
 counteth it his glory to make counterfeit things.

10 His heart is ashes, his hope is more vile than
 earth, and his life of less value than clay:

11 forasmuch as he knew not his Maker, and him
 that inspired into him an active soul, and ^c breathed ^c Gen. 2. 7.
 in a living spirit.

12 But they counted our life a pastime, and our
³ time here a market for gain: for, say they, we ³ Gr. *life.*
 must be getting every way, though it be by evil
 means.

13 ⁴ For this man, that of earthly matter maketh ⁴ Or, *So.*
 brittle vessels and graven images, knoweth himself
 to offend above all others.

14 And all the enemies of thy people, that hold
 them in subjection, are most foolish, and are more
 miserable than very babes.

15 For they counted all the idols of the heathen ^d Ps. 115. 5, 6,
 to be gods: ^d which neither have the use of eyes ^{7. & 135. 16,}
^{17.}

9. "The potter, forgetting that his own life is short, and that he
 "must soon sicken and die, vies with goldsmiths and silversmiths, and
 "imitates coppersmiths, and even glories in producing fine images out
 "of his frail material." Instead of seeing in his works the type of his
 own mortality, he strives to disguise their frailty by a counterfeit of
 gold, silver, or brass.

10—13. "For his heart's desires, and his hopes, and the aim of his
 "life are as worthless as the ashes of his oven, or the clay which he
 "works; since he knows not his Maker, who fashioned him from the
 "clay, and imparted that soul which is the living energy within him,
 "and breathed into him the breath of life. Such men" (like the people
 of Tyre in Ezek. xxvii.) "would make life a mere fair for amusement,
 "pomp, and lucrative trade, saying that they must needs increase their
 "substance, though it be by fraud and unjust gain" (Prov. xxviii. 8.
 1 Tim. vi. 5.). "For the man who makes brittle images of earthen-
 "ware, the material of common utensils, must be conscious that his
 "imposture renders him the worst offender of all."

14, 15. "All the heathen oppressors of God's people" (both the
 Egyptians in ancient times, and the Chaldeans at a later period,
 Habak. ii. 18, 19.), "were no better than babes in their wretch-
 "ed folly; for they accounted all the idols of the heathen to be
 "gods, though they can neither see with their eyes, nor inhale air
 "with their nostrils, nor handle anything with their fingers; whilst
 "their feet are useless for walking." It was the aim of heathen Rome

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² Or, air. to see, nor noses to draw ² breath, nor ears to hear, nor fingers of hands to handle; and as for their feet, they are slow to go.

16 For man made them, and he that borrowed his own spirit fashioned them: but no man can make a god like unto himself.

^e ch. 13. 10, 18. 17 For being mortal, he worketh ^e a dead thing with wicked hands: for he himself is better than the things which he worshippeth: whereas he lived *once*, but they never.

18 Yea, they worshipped those beasts also that are most hateful: for being compared together, some are worse than others.

19 Neither are they beautiful, so much as to be desired in respect of beasts: but they went without the praise of God and his blessing.

CHAPTER XVI.

2 God gave strange meat to his people, to stir up their appetite, and vile beasts to their enemies, to take it from them. 5 He stung with his serpents, 12 but soon healed them by his word only. 17 The creatures altered their nature to pleasure God's people, and to offend their enemies.

to comprehend the various deities of the conquered nations in the state religion, and to admit all alike into the worship of the Pantheon; a policy of worldly expediency, to conciliate the subject races. Thus they accounted all the idols of the nations to be gods, or lawful objects of worship.

16, 17. "For the makers of them were men who live and breathe "at the will of the Creator, having no power over the spirit to retain "the spirit" (Eccles. viii. 8.), "much less can they give life to the "forms which they fashion, or endue with any Divine attributes a "mere human image. For whilst the idol-maker is himself a living "mortal, his impious work is lifeless; and thus he is superior to his "idols, who never lived." Man is God's handiwork, the idol is of man's framing. If then the idol is inferior to its maker, how infinitely must it be beneath Him who created the maker of it! Men became like dumb idols (Ps. cxv. 8.) when they preferred them to their own souls, that were God's offspring, made in His own image (Acts xvii. 29.).

18, 19. "The Egyptians also worshipped the vilest of animals, which "appear worse than others even in the judgment of the ignorant and "thoughtless; for even if viewed with other animals they would not "be desired for their beauty: much less when, through man's misuse "of them, they are severed from the approval and blessing originally "bestowed upon them by the Creator" (Gen. i. 22, 25.), "being involved in the curse of idolatry." Thus the curse came upon the cattle of Egypt (Exod. ix. 3.); and it was threatened to the cattle of Israel (Deut. xxviii. 18.).

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THEREFORE ^aby the like were they punished ^a ch. 12. 23.
worthily, and by the multitude of beasts ^btor- ^b Num. 21. 6.
mented. ^c ch. 11. 15, 16.

2 Instead of which punishment, dealing graciously with thine own people, thou preparedst for them meat of a strange taste, even ^cquails to stir up their ^c Num. 11. 31.
appetite:

3 to the end that they, desiring food, might for the ugly sight of the beasts sent among them lothe even that, which they must needs desire; but these, suffering penury for a short space, might be made partakers of a strange taste.

4 For it was requisite, that upon them exercising tyranny should come penury, which they could not avoid: but to these it should only be shewed how their enemies were tormented.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. "Therefore the Egyptians were justly plagued with multitudes of noisome beasts, resembling the objects of their foolish superstition." See above, xi. 15, 16.

2. "But when God manifested to His own people His power over the living things which He had made, He sent them benefits instead of plagues; providing a flight of quails for their food, a new relish for their appetite." There is a further contrast here with respect to food; for the plagues of blood and of frogs rendered the food of the Egyptians loathsome to them (Exod. viii. 3.), polluting their rivers, houses, and beds; and when they died, the land stank (Exod. viii. 14.), thus aggravating the hunger and thirst which afflicted them. But in the case of the Hebrews in the desert of Sin (Exod. xvi. 1, 2.), though they hungered for a time, they were chastened but not killed; and even when the quails were sent in wrath, and they buried those that rusted for strange meats, there was mercy mingled with the Divine displeasure. "They were not for long deprived even of the more delicate meats, such as are had in fertile and inhabited countries, for God provided His plenty for them in the desert; for in the evening a cloud of quails flew from the sea, overshadowing the whole camp, so near the ground as to be easily caught. By catching and cooking them as each desired, they enjoyed the choicest flesh-meat, and had no lack of relish; and they made preserves for the meat round the camp" (*Philo*).

3, 4. "When the Egyptians hungered, the hideous appearance of the frogs that were sent upon them made them loathe even the common food that was necessary to satisfy their appetite; but the Israelites after feeling want for a little while partook of a choice food of strange taste. For the tyrannical oppressors must be afflicted with hunger without relief; but it sufficed for the Hebrews to add to their past sufferings in Egypt a brief experience of want, that

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5 For when the horrible fierceness of beasts came upon ²these, and they perished with the ^dstings of crooked serpents, thy wrath endured not for ever :

² Or, *thy people.*

^d Num. 21. 6.

1 Cor. 10. 9.

6 but they were troubled for a small season, that they might be admonished, having ^aa sign of salvation, to put them in remembrance of the commandment of thy law.

^e Num. 21. 9.

7 For he that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by thee, that art the Saviour of all.

8 And in this thou madest thine enemies confess, that it is thou who deliverest from all evil :

"they might know that it was no slight plague that had been sent upon their enemies." See xi. 8, 9.

5, &c. The author proceeds to speak of the mercy shown to the Israelites when they were plagued with fiery serpents. In Deut. viii. 15, it is said that the desert through which they journeyed was infested by scorpions, and serpents called "Seraphim," or burning ones, on account of the inflammation produced by their deadly and venomous bite. It may be inferred, from Deut. xxxii. 24, that the perils of the wilderness included the teeth of wild beasts and adders. In Ps. xci. 13, God's people are said to be protected from the lion, adder, young lion and dragon; and there were wild beasts in the wilderness of Christ's temptation (St. Mark i. 13.). In Num. xxi. 6, the serpents called "Seraphim" are their assailants; and the means appointed for their cure was a brazen image of one of them. It was lifted upon a pole, that it might be conspicuous to all, and become a type of Christ's healing power on the cross; not that the serpent of brass itself represented Christ, for it was rather a type of the Old Serpent deprived of his sting, showing that when Christ should be lifted up, the prince of this world should be cast out (St. John xii. 31.). It is said that the Hebrews after the plague of serpents carried about the brazen image, using it as a standard, or as a means of protection from serpents, and this may have led to the idolatry mentioned in 2 Kin. xviii. 4.

5—7. "Even when the Hebrews were exposed to the fierce assaults of wild beasts, and were destroyed by the stings of scorpions and the bitings of fiery serpents, God's displeasure endured not to the end; but after a short correction, the serpent of brass was given to them to be their instructor in the way of salvation, and to remind them of the precepts of God's law; for the healing virtue which was felt by those who turned to gaze at it proceeded, not from the image of brass, but from God the Saviour of all." There was no inherent virtue in the serpent of brass; but they saw in it the image of their enemy, disarmed and vanquished by the power of the unseen God. It was the likeness of the destroyer, and not of the Saviour; and it was set up not to be worshipped, but rather as an offering to God in behalf of the sufferers (compare 1 Sam. vi. 4, 5.).

8—11. "Thus our enemies learned that none but God could deliver men from every evil. For they perished by the stings of flies and

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9 for ^f them the bitings of grasshoppers and flies <sup>Ex. 8. 24.
& 10. 4.
Rev. 9. 3, &c.</sup> killed, neither was there found any remedy for their life: for they were worthy to be punished by such.

10 But thy sons not the very teeth of venomous dragons overcame: for thy mercy was *ever* by them, and healed them.

11 For they were ²pricked, that they should re- ²Gr. *stung*. member thy words; and were quickly saved, that not falling into deep forgetfulness, they might be ³continually mindful of thy goodness.

12 For it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaister, that restored them to health: but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things.

13 For thou hast power of life and death: thou ^gledest to the gates of hell, and bringest up again. ^gDeut. 32. 39.
¹Sam. 2. 6.

14 A man indeed killeth through his malice: and the spirit, when it is gone forth, returneth not; neither the soul received up cometh again. <sup>Ps. 105.
Tobit 13. 2.</sup>

“locusts; and found no remedy, such punishments being according to their deserts. But God’s children survived even the bites of venomous snakes, when His mercy interfered to heal them. For the pricking of their wounds brought them to the remembrance of God’s commandments, and they escaped with sharp anguish, lest after receiving the benefit, they should fall into forgetfulness and indifference.” The meaning is, that the Egyptians suffered more damage from insects than the Hebrews sustained from the teeth of dragons. The swarms in Exod. viii. 21, are called in the Greek “flies,” but Josephus and the Targums describe them as a “mixture of noisome beasts.” The locusts consumed them by devouring the fruit of their ground (Exod. x. 4, 5. Ps. lxxviii. 46.).

12, 13. “For they were not cured by the use of herbs or salves, but by the word of God that heals all things. For He has the power of life and death, to kill and to make alive, to bring men down to the gates of hell or the grave, and to bring them up by an unexpected deliverance or recovery, after they have been at death’s door through sore sickness or peril” (Ps. ix. 13; cvii. 18. Is. xxxviii. 10. 2 Cor. 1. 8—10.). This may be compared with Ps. cvii. 20, “He sent His word and healed them.” So the Targum on Num. xxi. 9 gives this paraphrase: “He who contemplated the serpent of brass, and was intent on the Name of the Word of the Lord, lived.” Even those who are healed by means of herbs and salves, owe their cure to the Saviour of all, by whose aid men are guided to the discovery of such remedies (Exod. xv. 25, 26. Eccus. xxxviii. 4—8.). But His power is more evident in sudden deliverances and unexpected cures when life has been despaired of.

14, 15. “Man in his malice can kill, but when the deed is done he has no more that he can do (St. Luke xii. 4.); the spirit goes forth

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15 But it is not possible to escape thine hand.

^h Ex. 9. 23.

ⁱ Ex. 5. 2.

16 ^h For the ungodly, ⁱ that denied to know thee, were scourged by the strength of thine arm: with strange rains, hails, and showers, were they persecuted, that they could not avoid, and through fire were they consumed.

“and is beyond his reach; it will not return at his call to restore to “the bodily frame the life which has been taken. But there is no “escape from God’s hand even in death” (St. Luke xii. 5.). Thus God alone has the power of life and death, for the living and the dead are alike in His hands (Rev. i. 18.). Therefore the suicide who terminates his life by his own act, vainly attempts to escape that hand: “If I make my bed in hell, thou art there also” (Ps. cxxxix. 8. Amos ix. 2, 3.). Satan has the power of death, but he cannot repair what his malice has destroyed.

16, &c. The next contrast between God’s dealings with Israel and with the Egyptians is found in His raining down manna upon the one, and fire and hail upon the other. Upon the plague of hail Philo observed that the great wonder of it was that it happened in Egypt, a country where there is no winter, and scarcely any rainfall, except a few showers in the maritime districts. “In such a land the “weather suddenly assumed a new aspect, and there arose wintry “storms with rain, hail, collisions of clouds, and thunder and lightning of portentous appearance. The flames of lightning were not “extinguished by the hail, nor did they melt the ice which fell, but “both continued to run up and down over long distances of space. “The great convulsion terrified men by its strangeness; they thought “that God in His wrath was changing everything. Their plants and “crops were devastated; their beasts perished either by the cold, or “by the blows of the hailstones, or being struck by lightning; and “those that escaped terrified the rest by the spectacle of their wounds “and burns. Then followed a sultry, parching South wind, producing “languor and head-ache, and bringing the locusts.” The mingling of fire and hail was considered to be an extraordinary infliction, especially as the heat and cold, flames and moisture, hailstones and coals of fire (Ps. xviii. 12, 13.), seemed to be in conflict, and yet neither mitigated the fury of the other. It was not like the sulphurous storm at Sodom, in which the fire raged without resistance, but a warfare of the elements, in which both maintained their force without diminution. See Ecclus. xxxix. 29—31.

16—19. “But Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who impiously refused “to know the Lord” (Exod. v. 2.), “were smitten by the strength of “His arm, for they were overtaken by strange storms of rain and “hail” (Exod. ix. 24.) “without remedy, and consumed by fire; a “fire of a most astonishing power that burned with vehemence in “water, by which all flames are quenched, for the world was armed “by its Maker to contend for the just against the wicked” (see v. 20, 21.). “So the flame of the lightning was at one time restrained “from hurting the beasts that were sent against the wicked, that they “might observe this, and see that it was by the judgment of God that

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17 For, which is most to be wondered at, ^k the ^k ch. 19. 20.
fire had more force in the water, that quencheth all
things: for the world ¹ fighteth for the righteous. ¹ Judg. 5. 20.
^{See ver. 24.}

18 For sometime the flame was mitigated, that it
might not burn up the beasts that were sent against
the ungodly; but themselves might see and perceive
that they were persecuted with the judgment of God.

19 And at another time it burneth even in the
midst of water above the power of fire, that it might
destroy the fruits of an unjust land.

20 ^m Instead whereof thou feddest thine own peo- ^m Ex. 16. 14.
ple with angels' food, and didst send them from ^{Num. 11. 7.}
heaven bread prepared without their labour, able ^{Ps. 78. 25.}
to content every man's delight, and agreeing to every ^{John 6. 31.}
taste.

21 For thy ⁿ ² sustenance declared thy sweetness ⁿ Judg. 6. 4.
² Or, *manna*.

“they were harassed; at another time the same flame exceeded the
“ordinary power of fire by burning in the midst of the water, to
“destroy the fruits of the land for the wickedness of its inhabitants”
(Ps. cvii. 33, 34.). It is said here that the hail and lightning destroy-
ed their crops and cattle, without ridding their land of the noxious
reptiles and insects that infested it. This is perhaps inferred from
the hail being followed by the plague of locusts (Exod. x. 5.).

20, 21. “But from the same heaven which poured out the hail upon
“Egypt, God provided angels' food for His people, and rained down
“manna upon them, bread that was prepared without human labour,
“having in it all that was delicious, and acceptable to every one who
“tasted it. This manna, which He gave them to be the stay of their
“life, or their daily bread, declared His sweetness to His children”
(1.) Because to feed upon it was to taste and see that the Lord is good,
Ps. xxxiv. 8; and to experience the goodness whereby He prepares
for the poor, Ps. lxxviii. 10. (2.) Because it was the type of the heavenly
wisdom of God's revealed word, the tree of life and immortality, whose
fruit is sweeter than honey, and more precious than gold, Ps. xix. 10.
Prov. iii. 13, 14. “For it ministered to the appetite of every one
“that partook of it, and was tempered to his taste or liking.”

The manna is described in Exod. xvi. 14 as a small round thing,
as small as the hoar frost on the ground. It was a fine thin substance,
as it were “peeled or scaled,” “minute, and as it were beaten with a
“pestle” (*Vulgate*). Like the hoar frost, it melted in the sunshine
(Exod. xvi. 21.). The people doubted what it was, and at first took
it for frost or snow. According to Josephus, Moses first tasted it and
then offered it to the people; they were delighted with it, for the
taste was like honey, and it was so Divine a food that those who par-
took of it required no other nourishment. Its appearance was like
bdellium, and its size that of the coriander seed. In the Targum of
Jonathan it is said to have been “the bread that was reserved for
“them in the highest heaven from the beginning,” and the people

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² Or, *was tempered.*
^o ch. 19. 21.

unto thy children, and serving to the appetite of the eater, ²tempered itself to every man's liking.

22 °But snow and ice endured the fire, and melted not, that they might know that fire burning in the hail, and sparkling in the rain, did destroy the fruits of the enemies.

23 But this again did even forget his own strength, that the righteous might be nourished.

^p ch. 19. 6.

24 For ^pthe creature that serveth thee, who art the Maker, increaseth his strength against the unrighteous for their punishment, and abateth his strength for the benefit of such as put their trust in thee.

are said to have gathered it until the fourth hour of the day, after which the sun melted it. The taste of it is said in one place to have been like honey, in another like fresh oil; whilst the mixed multitude loathed it as if it was dry and unsatisfying. Hence arose the idea expressed here, that it conveyed a different taste to different palates. St. Basil quotes a tradition that to different palates it tasted like bread, fish, fowl, flesh of beasts, or garden herbs, altering its flavour according to the fancy of the eater. Philo says of it: "This food was produced without labour or care of man, not from the earth in the usual way, but from heaven by a wondrous work for the benefit of those who used it. It was not hunger but plenty; but the mixed multitude counted those to be ill-fed who were nourished by the Divine words, for they had no taste of the wisdom that nourished all." In 1 Cor. x. 3, the manna is called a spiritual meat, being a bread provided by the Spirit or Word of God. It is also compared to the Divine food provided for us in the "breaking of bread," which is the "sustenance" which now declares God's sweetness to His children. For, as "the manna represented to every man the taste which himself did like, having in its own potentiality all those tastes and dispositions eminently, so the Blessed Sacrament is to every man's faith that which his faith wisely apprehends, and those who have less faith receive a less benefit; but to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly."

22—24. "For the manna, though of a nature akin to snow and ice, endured the fire" (when it was baked in pans and made into cakes, Num. xi. 8.) "without melting; and this reminded the Hebrews of the wonder of the fire blazing in the hail, and gleaming in the midst of the rain, by which the crops of their enemies perished; whilst the same element of fire seemed to suspend its natural force, that the righteous might have nourishment. Thus the things created do service to the Creator" (v. 17, 20.), by exerting their powers to the utmost for vengeance against the wicked, and relaxing them for the benefit of those who put their trust in Him." So in Is. xliii. 1, 2, God promises to lead His people safely through fire and water; and the element of water was controlled at the passage of the Red Sea.

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25 Therefore even then was it altered into all
²fashions, and was obedient to thy grace, that ²Or, *things*.
 nourisheth all things, according to the desire ³of ³Or, *of them that prayed*.
 them that had need:

26 that thy children, O Lord, whom thou lovest,
 might know, that ¹it is not the growing of fruits ¹Deut. 8. 3.
 that nourisheth man: but that it is thy word, which ²Matt. 4. 4.
 preserveth them that put their trust in thee.

27 For that which was not destroyed of the fire,
¹being warmed with a little sunbeam, soon melted ¹Exod. 16. 21.
 away:

28 that it might be known, that ¹we must prevent ¹Ps. 88. 13.
 the sun to give thee thanks, and at the dayspring
 pray unto thee.

29 For the hope of the unthankful shall melt
 away as the winter's hoar frost, and shall run
 away as unprofitable water.

25, 26. "Therefore God so changed the effects of heat as to make
 "it entirely subservient to His gift of food for the nourishment of
 "His people; that He might give them that which they desired in
 "their need; and that His beloved sons might know that men are
 "not nourished by the growth of the fruits of the earth, but by the
 "Word of God that preserves those who believe in Him." One pur-
 pose of the gift of manna was to teach men their entire dependence
 upon God, without whose blessing all their labour would be ineffectual;
 and the Hebrews were afterwards reminded of this, lest, when they
 had eaten and were full, they should say, "My power and the might
 "of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deut. viii. 3, 16—18;
 Ezek. xvi. 17—19. Hos. ii. 8. St. Matt. iv. 4.).

27. "For the manna, which was not destroyed when they baked it
 "with fire, melted when it was exposed for a short time to the heat
 "of the sun's rays." In order to prevent them from hoarding it up
 for the morrow, and to make them more entirely dependent upon
 God for their daily supply, it melted, and was corrupted (Exod. xvi.
 19—21.). So we learn to pray, Give us *this day* our daily bread.

28, 29. "That it might be known that men should rise early before
 "the sun, to offer their thanksgivings" (Ps. v. 3; lxiii. 6; cxix. 62;
 cxxx. 6.), "and begin before the dawn of day to make their suppli-
 "cations to God; for the hope of the unthankful shall melt away as
 "winter hoar-frost, and shall run off as unprofitable water" (see v.
 14.). The early morning is the time for receiving God's blessings,
 and for thanking Him for them. If it was ordered that the Hebrews
 in the desert should seek their spiritual meat in the early dawn, is
 it not reasonable for Christians to communicate early and fasting?
 For it is in the holy Eucharist that we chiefly make prayers and
 intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men. "Give the firstfruits
 "of the day to God."

WISDOM OF SOLOMON, XVII.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 Why the Egyptians were punished with darkness. 4 The terrors of that darkness. 11 The terrors of an ill conscience.

CHAPTER XVII.

This chapter is entirely devoted to the subject of the three days' darkness with which the Egyptians were plagued. In Exod. x. 21—23, it is described as a "darkness which might be felt," and whilst it continued the Egyptians saw not one another, neither arose any from his place. It was not therefore a mere gloom, such as is produced by an eclipse, for in that case they might have used lamps or candles: it was rather a combination of clouds of impenetrable density, which not only darkened the sun (like the black sackcloth of hair in Rev. vi. 12.), but obstructed the passage of any light through the air, so that there was no relief or remedy. "Those who lay on their beds durst not rise; if any necessity urged them, they felt for the walls like blind men. No fires could be kindled in that dense fog; or if it could be obtained, no light reached their eyes through it. They could neither speak nor hear, nor procure any food; and they lay in suspense, hunger, and silence." Josephus adds that "some of them died miserably, being deprived of sight and choked in their breathing by the fog; whilst others were in fear lest they should be swallowed up or engulfed in the cloud." The darkness also suggested the idea of the evil spirits and powers of darkness, who move like wild beasts in the night (Ps. civ. 20.), or as lions seeking whom they may devour. Thus in Ps. lxxviii. 49, God is said to have shown the fierceness of His anger "by sending evil angels among them," and this is supposed to refer to the plague of darkness. It appears, however, that the author of Wisdom had a further object; to depict those horrors of remorse which torment the guilty in the hours of silence and solitude, when they are left to themselves, and there is nothing to divert their attention from the voice of conscience. Since the conscience of the guilty is a witness within them of judgment to come, and of the fearful expectation of a just retribution for their crimes hereafter, the state of the Egyptians might be regarded as a foretaste of hell, and the description of their agony would then be a glimpse of hell itself, or the darkness which should hereafter receive them (ver. 21.). Hence many of the expressions closely resemble the language of the Greek and Latin poets concerning the "Tartarus," or "Styx," the abodes of darkness in which the souls of the wicked after death underwent the punishment which their crimes merited. The gloomy spectres and the hissing of serpents are like the idea of the Eumenides or Furies, who were described as having serpents twined in their hair, and blood dripping from their eyes: these were the powers of vengeance who inflicted chastisement on the criminal in every way,—by expulsion from human society, by the pangs of conscience, and by torments in the lower world. The poets called them "daughters of the night," or "children of darkness;" they were like hounds pursuing their victim and giving him no rest. Their office was chiefly to avenge crimes of murder, perjury, treachery, and the breach of the laws of hospitality. Again, the terrible faces and forms answer to the description

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FOR great are thy judgments, and cannot be expressed: therefore ²unnurtured souls have ²Or, *souls that will not be reformed.* erred.

2 For when unrighteous men thought to oppress the holy nation; ^athey being shut up ³in their ^aEx. 10. 22. houses, the prisoners of darkness, and fettered with ³Or, *under their roofs.* the bonds of a long night, lay [there] ⁴exiled from ⁴Or, *fugitives.* the eternal providence.

3 For while they supposed to lie hid in their secret sins, they were scattered ⁵under a dark veil ⁵Or, *in.* of forgetfulness, being horribly astonished, and troubled with [strange] ⁶apparitions.

⁶ Or, *sights.*

in Virgil of the ministers of death, who are seen in the vestibule of the lower world: *famine, dismal old age, pale diseases, degraded poverty, deadly war, insane discord* with snaky hair and blood-stained garlands; whilst the noise of crashing above them is like the punishment of Tantalus and the Lapithæ, over whom a black rock of flint was tottering always ready to fall. These ideas, by which the heathen had described the gnawings of the guilty conscience, the vulture of the fable of Prometheus, find their counterpart here in the Egyptian darkness; for the Egyptians "were unto themselves more grievous than the darkness."

1. For God's judgments are great, and it is difficult to apprehend them; they are too deep for minds that have not been trained in the knowledge of the truth, and therefore such souls have erred concerning them. See Ps. xl. 5; xcii. 5, 6. The undisciplined mind takes exception to many portions of God's revelation; it is dissatisfied with the partial knowledge now given to us, and demands why the truth has not been manifested to all alike, or why so many souls are left in ignorance and sin, and thus it makes shipwreck of faith, or presumes to dogmatize in matters which the Divine wisdom has withheld from us.

2. "Thus the Egyptians in their contempt of the Divine law imagined that they could easily oppress the holy nation; but God sent the plague of darkness and of a long night upon them, in which they lay as prisoners in fetters, confined to their houses, and banished from the light of His everlasting Providence." When they looked for the light of morning, there came thick darkness, "gloom and a storm" (Exod. x. 22, LXX.; compare Deut. iv. 11.); thus they were made "outlaws from Providence," which causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good (St. Matt. v. 45.).

3, 4. This was the reproof of their folly, when in their secret sins they had imagined that no eye could see them (Job xxiv. 15.), or that the darkness would cover them (Ps. cxxxix. 11.), or hide them from the presence of God; for the thick veil which excluded the light of day bewildered their minds, so that they were beside themselves for fear and amazement, and were disturbed by phantoms and spectres. For though they had taken refuge in some corner or place of concealment (Is. xxviii. 17.), this was no protection from the horrors of that terrible darkness, for the air was full of strange noises

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4 For neither might the corner that held them keep them from fear: but noises [as of waters] falling down sounded about them, and sad visions appeared unto them with heavy countenances.

5 No power of the fire might give them light: neither could the bright flames of the stars endure to lighten that horrible night.

as of things hurled from above, and they dreamed of stern forms with doleful countenances. These terrors are like the doom of Pashur (Jer. xx. 3, 4.), who was named Magor-missabib (Ps. xxxi. 13.), for he should be "a terror to himself and to all his friends." "A man of evil conscience is never at rest. He is put to shifts to excuse his crime before men, but he cannot excuse it to God or himself. He is forced to use arts of forgetfulness, that he may not remember his sorrow. He runs to weakness for his excuse, and to sin for comfort, and to the paths of hell for his refuge. This is the poet's vulture, that gnaws perpetually; the fire that torments, but devours not" (St. Luke xvi. 24.). "Even the heathen Epicureans observed, that the wicked have fear, even when their condition is safe. None are more subject to this slavish fear than tyrants and oppressors of other men, who in their confidence in cruelty were most terrible to others. What was it then which these men did so much fear? It was no revenge which men could attempt upon them. What then? What they dreaded was *the company of themselves, or solitary conference with their own consciences*. Yet no man's conscience can make his heart afraid, unless the conscience itself be first affrighted. The consciences of earthly monarchs, in the height of their earthly security, stood in fear of the censure of some superior judge. It was the witness in man to a judgment to come." See Rom. ii. 14—16.

5—10. It was in vain to kindle torches or lamps, for no flame was sufficient to give light in that darkness; nor did the most brilliant stars penetrate the dense gloom of that horrible night. But there gleamed upon them at intervals a massive flame, burning of itself without fuel, and full of terror; and in their dread of that appearance which they durst not gaze upon, they imagined that the common objects which met their sight were changed for the worse, assuming ghastly forms from the lurid aspect that was cast upon them (see Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8.). The pretended skill of their magicians was defeated, and the wisdom wherein they gloried was proved to be contemptible (Exod. viii. 19.). These men professed to have power to remove the plagues by their incantations, and thus to allay the alarms and anxieties which afflicted the souls of the Egyptians; but now they were themselves so overwhelmed with fear, as to be objects of derision. For it had been their boast that none of the dreadful evils of the plagues had alarmed them; yet now they were scared by imaginary movements of noisome beasts, or hissing of serpents and reptiles, so that they perished in their terror, as though they refused to look into the very air which they breathed, from which there was no escape except by death. The fears of the guilty are described in Lev. xxvi.

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6 Only there appeared unto them a fire kindled of itself, very dreadful: for being much terrified, they thought the things which they saw to be worse than the sight they saw not.

7 ^b As for the illusions of art magick, they were put down, and their vaunting in wisdom was re-
b Ex. 7. 12.
& 8. 7, 13.
& 9. 11.
 proved with disgrace.

8 For they, that promised to drive away terrors and troubles from a sick soul, were sick themselves of fear, worthy to be laughed at.

9 For though no terrible thing did fear them; yet being scared with beasts that passed by, and hissing of serpents,

10 they died for fear, ² denying that they saw the
2 Or, refusing
to look upon.
 air, which could of no side be avoided.

11 For wickedness, condemned by her own witness, is very timorous, and being pressed with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things.

12 For fear is nothing else but a betraying of the succours which reason offereth.

36. Deut. xxviii. 65, 66. "Because men have a thousand little arts "to stifle the voice of conscience, or to make themselves deaf to it, "God has many ways of awakening them." Some, like Pilate, are aroused by dreams; others "by sudden alarms, by thunder and lightning, by hearing sad stories, by the flying of birds, or the hissing "of serpents, by the fall of waters, by the beating of a watch, the "noise of a cricket, or a superstitious tale; all these are suffered to "increase a man's fear. Therefore there is no avoiding punishment, "unless we will avoid sin; since even a shadow as well as substance "may become a Nemesis, when it is let loose by God, and conducted "by conscience." The magicians had produced serpents from their rods in opposition to Moses; they had also imitated the plagues of blood and frogs; but the boils afflicted them equally with the rest, so they could no longer withstand Moses (2 Tim. iii. 8.).

11—13. For wickedness is by nature cowardly; she incurs condemnation by her own witness, and always aggravates her calamities, because she is distressed by an evil conscience. For the fears of the guilty do but betray them to the evils from which they shrink, by depriving them of the succours which they could obtain from reason or thought; and where there is less self-reliance or expectation of succour from within, the mind is more bewildered, through its supposed ignorance of the cause whence the calamity proceeds. "Wicked "men, who in their prosperity have despised the Divine power, have "often been driven by sudden calamities to the opposite extreme of "superstitious terrors and unreasonable alarms." "In religion excess "of fear so impairs reason as to produce superstition." So Cain's fears aggravated his punishment (Gen. iv. 6, 7.). The fear of the

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13 And the expectation from within, being less, counteth the ignorance more than the cause which bringeth the torment.

14 But they sleeping the same sleep that night,
² which was indeed intolerable, and which came upon them out of the bottoms of inevitable hell,

² Or, *wherein they could do nothing.*

15 were partly vexed with monstrous apparitions, and partly fainted, their heart failing them: for a sudden fear, and not looked for, came upon them.

16 So then whosoever there fell down was straitly kept, shut up in a prison without iron bars.

17 For whether he were husbandman, or shepherd, or a labourer in the ³field, he was overtaken, and endured that necessity, which could not be avoided: for they were all bound with one chain of darkness.

³ Or, *desert.*

18 Whether it were a whistling wind, or a melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, or a pleasing fall of water running violently,

⁴ Or, *hideous.* 19 or a ⁴terrible sound of stones cast down,

guilty is their torment (1 John iv. 18.). They flee when none pursueth (Prov. xxviii. 1. Ps. liii. 5.). Their own wickedness corrects them, showing that their sin is an evil thing and bitter (Jer. ii. 19.). The guilty fear which presumes grievous things was also shown by Adam, in Gen. iii. 8; by Joseph's brethren, in Gen. xlii. 28; xliii. 18; by Ahab, in 1 Kin. xxi. 20; xxii. 8; by Belshazzar, in Dan. v. 6; by Pilate, in John xix. 8, 9, 12; and by Caiaphas and the Jewish rulers, in John xi. 47, 48. Acts v. 28. The fears of the guilty are also eloquently described in the Book of Job (xviii. 5—11; xv. 20—22; xx. 5, 8, 25, 27.). Conscious guilt bewildered Absalom, so that he forsook the counsels of worldly prudence (2 Sam. xvii. 14.).

14—19. But in that darkness the Egyptians lay as men overcome by the sleep of death, for it was a night that came upon them out of the recesses of Hades, a night in which no man could work (St. John ix. 4.); yet they had no rest, for they were sometimes harassed by portentous phantoms, and sometimes paralysed by their hearts failing them for fear; for a sudden and unexpected terror fell upon them. Such also was their helplessness, that if any one fell, he was unable to recover himself, and was chained to the spot, though no prison or bars of iron detained him. All were involved in the same unavoidable necessity,—the husbandman, the shepherd, and the solitary workman on the confines of the desert; all were bound alike by the same chain of darkness, and all noises terrified them alike, whether they seemed to them the whistling of the breeze (Lev. xxvi. 36. Gen. iii. 8, "the wind of the day"), or like melodious songs of birds in

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or a running that could not be seen of skipping beasts, or a roaring voice of most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains; these things made them to swoon for fear.

20 For the whole world shined with clear light, and none were hindered in their labour:

21 over them only was spread an heavy night, an image of ^cthat darkness which should afterward receive them: but yet were they unto themselves more grievous than the darkness.

^c Matt. 8. 12.
& 22. 13.
& 25. 30.
2 Pet. 2. 17.
Jude 13.

CHAPTER XVIII.

⁴ *Why Egypt was punished with darkness, 5 and with the death of their children. 18 They themselves saw the cause thereof. 20 God also plagued his own people. 21 By what means that plague was stayed.*

NEVERTHELESS thy saints had a very great ^alight, whose voice they hearing, and not ^aEx. 10. 23. seeing their shape, because they also had not suffered the same things, they counted them happy.

2 But for that they did not hurt them *now*, of whom they had been wronged before, they thanked them, and besought them pardon for that they had been enemies.

the spreading branches, or the even flow of rushing water (see Ezek. i. 24; xliii. 2. Rev. i. 15; xiv. 2; xix. 1, 6.), or the harsh noise of stones tumbling down, or the leaping of animals moving in the dark, or the roaring of the fiercest wild beasts, or an echo rebounding from a hollow place in the mountains.

20, 21. The world at large had the clear light of day, and pursued its labours without interruption (Ps. civ. 23.). It was only over the Egyptians that a heavy night was overspread, a type of the darkness of death which should afterwards overtake them (perhaps with special reference to those whose eyes were closed to the world when they were drowned in the Red Sea). Yet their evil conscience made them more grievous to themselves than the darkness (see above, on ver. 4.). Their inward spiritual blindness was also a worse evil than the darkness which oppressed them from without.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1, 2. "At the same time the holy people had an abundance of light" (see Exod. x. 23.); "and their enemies perceived this: for they heard their voices, though the darkness concealed them from their view. So they deemed them happy because of the things that happened to them, and thanked them for not retaliating for the wrongs which they had received, and sought to be reconciled to those with whom they had been at variance." This is inferred from Exod. xii. 33, for when the Israelites took their journey, they were not thrust out, but besought by the Egyptians to depart (see xix. 3.).

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^b Ex. 13. 21.
& 14. 24.
Ps. 78. 14.
& 105. 39.

3 ^b Instead whereof thou gavest them a burning pillar of fire, both to be a guide of the unknown journey, and an harmless sun to entertain them honourably.

² Or, incorruptible.

4 For they were worthy to be deprived of light, and imprisoned in darkness, who had kept thy sons shut up, by whom the ² uncorrupt light of the law was to be given unto the world.

^c Ex. 1. 16.

^d Ex. 2. 3, 5.

^e Ex. 12. 29.

^f Ex. 14. 24, &c.

5 ^c And when they had determined to slay the babes of the saints, ^d one child being cast forth, and saved, to reprove them, ^e thou tookest away the multitude of their children, and ^f destroyedst them altogether in a mighty water.

3. "For after plaguing the Egyptians with darkness, God gave His own "people a pillar of flaming fire to be their guide in their journeyings "through an unknown land, and to be a sun of unbroken splendour "during their glorious emigration." The pillar of fire is described in Exod. xiii. 21; xiv. 24. Ps. lxxviii. 14; cv. 39. It was a sign of God's present help, and a guide to them throughout their journeyings, enabling them to go by night as well as by day (Num. ix. 21.). By the cloud God put darkness between the Israelites and their pursuers (Josh. xxiv. 7.), and threw Pharaoh's host into confusion (Exod. xiv. 24.). It was also the sign to them when they were to halt, or to continue their march (Num. ix. 15—18.). Thus the exodus of Israel was rendered a "glorious emigration;" and it was their glory to be Hebrews, or men who had "passed over," even when they were wanderers and exiles upon earth.

4. "The Egyptians were justly punished by being deprived of light "and imprisoned in darkness, because they had forcibly detained in "the darkness of bondage those children of God through whom the "incorruptible light of His Law was to be given to the world." The Israelites were brought out of the "house of slaves" (Deut. v. 6.), not only that they might receive the light of God's commandments, but that they might be a light to the world, and that through them the sons of strangers might be brought to the knowledge of God. They were to show their wisdom and understanding to the nations (Deut. iv. 6.). They were to receive strangers to dwell among them (Lev. xix. 33, 34.), and they were to observe the sabbath (Exod. xx. 10.). They were admitted to the worship of the Temple (1 Kin. viii. 41—43. Is. lvi. 6, 7.). The prophets also looked forward to the time when all the ends of the world should remember themselves, and be turned unto the Lord (Ps. xxii. 27; lxxxvi. 9; cii. 15, 16.).

5. "The Egyptians were also punished for their wicked design to "destroy the infants of the holy people. For after the child Moses "had been exposed and rescued, all their firstborn were slain, and those "who had drowned the children of the Hebrews perished all together "in the mighty waters of the sea." Thus in Exod. iv. 22, 23, the death of Pharaoh's firstborn is threatened as a retribution for his cruelty to God's firstborn (see above, xi. 8.).

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6 ^g Of that night were our fathers certified afore, ^g Ex. 11. 4. that assuredly knowing unto what oaths they had given credence, they might afterwards be of good cheer.

7 So of thy people was accepted both the salvation of the righteous, and destruction of the enemies.

8 For wherewith thou didst punish our adversaries, by the same thou didst glorify us, whom thou hadst called.

9 ^h For the righteous children of good men did sacrifice secretly, and with one consent made ² a ² Or, a holy law, that the saints should be like partakers of the same good and evil, the fathers now singing out the songs of praise. ^h Ex. 12. 21,—23. ² Or, a covenant of God, or, league: See Ps. 50. 5.

10 But on the other side there sounded an ill according cry of the enemies, and a lamentable noise was carried abroad for children that were bewailed.

11 ⁱ The master and the servant were punished ⁱ Ex. 11. 5. & 12. 29.

6. "For their firstborn were slain in the night of Israel's deliverance, "which was revealed before to Abraham and the patriarchs, that God's "people might be of good courage, being well assured that they could "rely on the Divine oaths by which the promises had been confirmed" (Gen. xv. 13, 14, 18, 19.). This led them to look with confidence for the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked. For in the same passover in which God punished the adversaries, He glorified His people whom He called out of Egypt (Hos. xi. 1.).

9. "The Israelites, acting as pious sons of good parents, sacrificed "the passover secretly" (Exod. xii. 26, 27.), "and unanimously cove- "nanted to observe the law which they received from the Deity. For "by the paschal supper of the lamb, with bitter herbs and unleavened "bread, of which all partook alike, it was signified that the holy people "should all share equally in perils and advantages; and hymns of "praise were sung, in which the fathers began, and the children re- "sponded." So in 2 Chr. xxx. 21; xxxv. 15, 18, the observance of the passover is accompanied by "singing unto the Lord," and the use of musical instruments. See also Ps. lxxxii. 1—5.

10. "But instead of an echo of this noise of joy, there arose from "the Egyptians a discordant cry, and a piteous bewailing of children, "repeated from house to house." This was the "great cry" mentioned in Exod. xii. 30, the mourning for a firstborn, which has a special bitterness (Zech. xii. 10.).

11. "The master and slave, the king and the lowest of the people, "suffered alike, and underwent the same sentence of punishment" (Exod. xi. 5; xii. 29.). "It was the middle of the fifteenth night,

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after one manner; and like as the king, so suffered the common person.

12 So they all together had innumerable dead with one kind of death; neither were the living sufficient to bury them: for in one moment the noblest offspring of them was destroyed.

13 For whereas they would not believe any thing by reason of the enchantments; upon the destruction of the firstborn, they acknowledged this people to be the sons of God.

14 For while all things were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course,

15 thine Almighty word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction,

16 and brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and standing up filled all things with death; and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth.

“and the Word of the Lord slew every firstborn in the land of Egypt, “from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the captive princes “who were cast into the dungeon as hostages; for they also were “punished, because they rejoiced at the affliction of Israel. He slew “also the firstborn of the cattle, wherewith they tilled the ground. “The king cried out to the Israelites to begone, and their cattle also; “but Moses would not depart till Pharaoh and all his servants came “and besought them to go, for they said, If they delay one hour, we “shall be all dead” (*Targum*).

12. “All mourned with one consent, for the dead were innumerable; “and all perished by the same kind of death, sudden and violent. The “survivors were too few for the labour of their interment, since in a “moment the most honourable part of their nation had perished.” It appears from Num. xxxiii. 4, that the burial of the firstborn was accomplished before the Israelites went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. This is dwelt upon, perhaps, from the Egyptian rites of burial being more costly and elaborate than those of other nations.

13—16. “Though, after the other plagues, they had hardened their “hearts on account of the arts of their magicians, the death of their “firstborn compelled them to acknowledge that Israel was God’s child. “For when they all lay in the silence of repose, and midnight was “reached by the quick succession of the hours of sleep, God’s omnipotent Word came with terrible swiftness from the throne of His “Royal Majesty in heaven into the midst of that miserable land, war-ring against it with unsparing rigour. Then He stood and wielded “the sharp sword of God’s irreversible decree, and with one stroke

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17 Then suddenly ²visions of horrible dreams ^{2 Or, imaginations.} troubled them sore, and terrors came upon them unlooked for.

18 And one thrown here, and another there, half dead, shewed the cause of his death.

19 For the dreams that troubled them did fore-shew this, lest they should perish, and not know why they were afflicted.

20 Yea, the tasting of death touched the righteous also, and there was a destruction of the ^kmultitude ^{k Num. 16. 46, &c.} in the wilderness: but the wrath endured not long.

21 For then the blameless man made haste, and

“filled all things with death. For He reached to heaven as He walked “upon the earth.” The title of the “Word of God” seems to be applied here not only to the sentence of judgment upon the Egyptians, but also to the Person who executed it. Hence it has been argued that the author of Wisdom had some idea of the Word who was in the beginning with God and was God, especially as the same omnipotence and other personal attributes seem to be ascribed to “the “Word” of God in the Targums. In the writings of Philo also the “Word” is something more than an expression for the “Will” or the “power” of the Almighty, being called the “image of God.” In Ecclus. xliii. 26, it is said that “by His Word all things consist.” In Ezek. i. 24, “the voice of the Almighty” is rendered in the Greek “the voice of the Word.” So here “the Divine Word” is something more than the “Almighty hand” in xi. 17, being described as a Being of infinite power, walking on the earth and reaching to heaven, and having in His hand the sharp two-edged sword of the word or sentence of God’s justice (Heb. iv. 12.). This seems therefore to anticipate the teaching of the Gospel, that “Christ is the Omnipotent Word, the Son “of Man in heaven even whilst He walks upon earth, filling all things “with the power of His Deity; for He is before all things, and by “Him all things consist.” If, on the other hand, the “Word” only signifies “the sentence of Divine wrath,” the meaning will be that “the “instant it was passed in heaven it was executed upon earth,” and thus might be said to reach to heaven whilst it walked upon earth.”

17—19. “At the same time the Egyptians were grievously vexed “by the appearances of dreams and sudden alarms that came upon “them; and the strangeness of the visitation which brought death “into their houses was shown by the bodies of the dead and dying “which lay on all sides; whilst the dreams which had vexed them “made them fully aware of the cause of the ruin which befell them.” It was no “chance that happened to them” (1 Sam. vi. 9.), but a retribution for their cruelty to God’s firstborn.

20, 21. “But when the righteous nation of Israel experienced the “penalty of death, and many of them were smitten in the wilderness” (after the rebellion of Korah, Num. xvi. 46—50.), “the wrath of God “endured only for a little space; for Aaron, whose blameless priesthood

stood forth to defend them ; and bringing the shield of his proper ministry, even prayer, and the propitiation of incense, set himself against the wrath, and so brought the calamity to an end, declaring that he was thy servant.

22 So he overcame the destroyer, not with strength of body, nor force of arms, but with a word subdued he him that punished, alleging the oaths and covenants made with the fathers.

23 For when the dead were now fallen down by heaps one upon another, standing between, he stayed the wrath, and ²parted the way to the living.

¹ Ex. 28. 6,
9, 36.

24 ¹For in the long garment was the whole

“ had been attacked by the gainsaying of Korah hastened to be their “ champion, contending with the weapons of his own sacred office, which “ were prayer, and atonement by incense. Thus he withstood God’s “ indignation, and the plague ceased ; and this was a manifest proof “ that he was the chosen minister of the Lord ” (see Num. xvi. 5. Ps. xcix. 6—8. 2 Tim. ii. 19.). This is the distinctive mark of God’s true servants, that He suffers them to withstand even His just wrath, and hears them when they plead for other men. Such was Moses when God said to him, “ let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot “ against them ” (Exod. xxxii. 10.). Such also was Samuel (Jer. xv. 1.), and Abraham (Gen. xx. 7.), and Job (Job xlii. 8.).

22. “ And he overcame the opposition of the multitude, not by bodily “ strength, or by the use of weapons, but by the word of prayer, to which “ the messenger of wrath yielded, for God remembered His oaths and “ covenants with their fathers, which he pleaded before them.” So in Exod. xxxii. 13. Deut. ix. 27, Moses prayed that God would forgive the sin of His people, not only for His own mercies’ sake, but also on account of the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and His covenant with them.

23. “ For when the ground was strewn with corpses lying one upon “ another in heaps (Num. xvi. 48.), Aaron stood in the gap, and inter- “ cepted the plague in its course, making an interval, by which the “ fire of wrath was stayed before it reached the survivors.” In the same way the Targum describes him as standing in the midst, and making an interval with his censer. The plague was spreading like fire from one to another, and by this means its course was arrested, and the rest escaped like brands plucked from the burning.

24. “ For the preeminence of God’s high priest was declared by “ the holy garments, especially by the long robe, which together with “ the ephod represented the whole world ” (Exod. xxviii. 6.); “ the gold, “ blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen being typical severally of the “ energy of life, of the firmament of heaven, of the sea, and the flame “ of fire, whilst the bells denoted the harmony of the frame of nature.

world, and in the four rows of the stones was the glory of the fathers graven, and thy Majesty upon the diadem of his head.

25 Unto these the destroyer gave place, and

“ Thus Aaron was announced to be the appointed mediator between God and the world and its inhabitants. Also upon the breastplate of judgment he carried the glorious names of the fathers of the tribes of Israel engraved in the four rows of precious stones” (Exod. xxviii. 29.), “ the sign that the Hebrews were God’s peculiar treasure” (Exod. xix. 5, 6. Mal. iii. 17.). “ Upon the mitre or diadem which he wore upon his head there was engraved ‘ Holiness unto the Lord ’” (Exod. xxviii. 36—38.), “ declaring the majesty of the Lord of all, “ as His other garments signified the world which is in subjection to Him.” This mystical sense of the robes of Aaron was an early Jewish tradition, and is fully expounded by Josephus. “ The fine linen is the type of the earth, the purple signifies the sky, and the pomegranates and bells denote lightnings and thunders; the texture of gold signifies the element of light; the robe being the earth, the girdle is the ocean encompassing it. In the breastplate he finds a type of the sun and moon, and even of the twelve months of the year.” Philo’s observations upon it are of great beauty: “ It was intended that the world should be associated with man in his priesthood, and that man should join with the universe in its worship” (compare Ps. cxlv. 10—12; cxlviii. 3, 7—10.). “ The high priest of the Jews makes prayers and intercessions, not only for the whole race of man, but also for the parts of nature, for the earth, water, air, and fire; other priests pray only for their friends, neighbours, and fellowcitizens, but the Jewish high priest makes prayers and supplications for all things and all men, and therefore his sacred vesture is a resemblance of the universe.” The early writers of the Christian Church accepted this interpretation, with an additional application of it to the person of our Lord as the great High Priest and the Head of the Body, which is His Church. Thus they apply the bells to the sound of the Gospel, the preaching of salvation and of the acceptable year of the Lord. In the mitre and its inscription they saw a type of His royal dignity; showing that the “ head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God;” and that Christ is exalted far above all principality and power. The names on the breastplate are like the names of His elect, that are written in heaven; and the gems denote the glory which He gives to His saints. The “ Holiness to the Lord” answers to His saying that “ the Father had sanctified Him, and sent Him into the world.” The vesture denoted both His descent from heaven to dwell on earth, and His gathering together all things in one by the virtue of His Incarnation, and the union of the Deity to the earthly nature. Another tradition of the Jews regarded the various portions of the vesture as worn to atone for different sins,—pride, presumption, homicide, &c.

25. “ Such was the priestly dignity to which the destroyer gave way, as if he stood in awe of the glory and beauty that was upon

was afraid of them: for it was enough that they only tasted of the wrath.

CHAPTER XIX.

¹ *Why God shewed no mercy to the Egyptians, 5 and how wonderfully he dealt with his people. 14 The Egyptians were worse than the Sodomites. 18 The wonderful agreement of the creatures to serve God's people.*

AS for the ungodly, wrath came upon them without mercy unto the end: for he knew before what they would do;

^a *Ex. 14. 5, &c.* 2 how that having given them leave to depart, and sent them hastily away, ^a they would repent and pursue them.

² *Or, cast out by intreaty.* 3 For whilst they were yet mourning and making lamentation at the graves of the dead, they added another foolish device, and pursued them as fugitives, whom they had ² intreated to be gone.

4 For the destiny, whereof they were worthy, drew them unto this end, and made them forget

“him; and a taste of God's wrath sufficed for the chastisement of His “people.”

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1, 2. “A heavier wrath and an unsparing vengeance came upon “the Egyptians, pursuing them to the end, for God foresaw the evil “which they were about to do. For though after the death of the “firstborn they let the Hebrews depart, and sent them away with “haste” (Exod. xii. 33.), “God knew that they would repent of this “and pursue after them.”

3. “So before they had finished their mourning for their dead “firstborn” (Num. xxxiii. 4.), “they were drawn into another act of “folly, and pursued the Hebrews as if they had been runaway slaves, “though they had just dismissed them with entreaties to be gone” (see above, xviii. 2.). It was the last sign of Pharaoh's obduracy and strange infatuation, that after such a great variety of miracles, he should pursue after the Israelites. Yet it was only one of many instances in which worldly wisdom has imagined that it could frustrate the counsel of God. They may have argued like the Syrians in 1 Kin. xx. 23, that all this power was only local: “Though the God of the “Hebrews was mightier than their magicians, and had given Moses “a greater command over earth and water, the air and the clouds, and “over hosts of noisome animals, than any of their priests or princes “could have from their gods, yet they might reason, Who knows whether “all this power may not be restrained within the limits of Egypt, with “no commission to use it over Palestine and Midian?”

4. “Thus a necessity, which was the worthy punishment of their “guilt, made them rush blindly into destruction, in forgetfulness of

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the things that had already happened, that they might fulfil the punishment which was wanting to their torments:

5 ^b and that thy people might pass a wonderful way: but they might find a strange death. ^b Ex. 14. 28, 29.

6 For ^c the whole creature in his proper kind was fashioned again anew, serving the peculiar commandments that were given unto them, that thy children might be kept without hurt: ^c See ch. 16. 24, 25.

7 *as namely*, a cloud shadowing the camp; and where water stood before, dry land appeared; and out of the Red sea a way without impediment; and out of the violent stream a green field:

8 wherethrough all the people went that were defended with thy hand, seeing thy marvellous strange wonders.

9 For they went at large like horses, and leaped

"their former plagues and calamities, that they might fill up the measure of the vengeance that was due to them." The "necessity" refers to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exod. xiv. 4, which was the consequence of his incorrigibleness under all God's warnings and chastenings. They were to fill up the measure of their guilt, and the measure of their punishment, by drinking to the dregs the cup of God's indignation (Ps. lxxv. 8. Is. li. 17.).

5. "This was ordered by God, that He might make a marvellous way for His people through the sea, whilst their enemies met with their death in a strange manner." This strangeness was seen in the sea withholding its strength until the morning watch, when the whole Egyptian host was involved, without the possibility of escape.

6. "In these miracles there was as it were a new creation" (Num. xvi. 30. Jer. xxxi. 22.); "for the natural properties of the elements which God created were moulded again by His power, that they might minister to His decree, and that His children might be preserved unhurt" (see on xvi. 24.). Each thing in its kind was "accommodated to the Creator's will."

7. "For there appeared a cloud overshadowing their camp, and dry land emerging where water had prevailed before, a way in the Red Sea in which they should not stumble (Is. lxiii. 13.), and a flowery field in the place of the mighty wave." The bed of the sea might be so described, from the marine plants and weeds which it produces (Jonah ii. 5. See also Ps. cvi. 9. Josh. ii. 10.).

8. "Thus the host of the Hebrews, comprising the entire nation with their flocks" (Exod. x. 9.), "passed through the sea, shielded by God's hand, and gazing with wonder at His miracles."

9. "They were like horses prancing in a rich pasture" (Is. lxiii. 13, 14.), "or like lambs leaping for joy" (Ps. cxiv. 3, 4.), "when they sang the praises of the Lord their Saviour" (Exod. xv. 1, 2, 20.).

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like lambs, praising thee, O Lord, who hadst delivered them.

² Or, *lice*. 10 For they were yet mindful of the things that were done while they sojourned in the strange land, how the ground brought forth ² flies instead of cattle, and how the river cast up a multitude of frogs instead of fishes.

^d Ex. 16. 13. Num. 11. 31. 11 But ^d afterwards they saw a new generation of fowls, when, being led with their appetite, they asked delicate meats.

³ Or, *comfort*. 12 For quails came up unto them from the sea for their ³ contentment.

13 And punishments came upon the sinners not without former signs by the force of thunders: for they suffered justly according to their own wickedness, insomuch as they used a more hard and hateful behaviour toward strangers.

14 For the *Sodomites* did not receive those, whom they knew not when they came: but these brought friends into bondage, that had well deserved of them.

15 And not only so, but peradventure some

10. "For the plagues which had come upon their enemies in Egypt were still fresh in their remembrance; how their beasts had perished, and their land had swarmed with noisome insects, and the river in which the fish had died had produced a multitude of frogs."

11—13. "But the Hebrews, on the contrary, partook more and more of His bounty; for they soon afterwards beheld a strange flight of birds, when their lust impelled them to ask for delicate meats; and the same sea which sent a flight of quails for their comfort, was a source of plagues to the guilty people" (Exod. x. 13.); "and this was a just penalty for their obdurate wickedness, for they rejected the preceding warnings of the lightning and hail in their own land" (Exod. ix. 34.), "and the more fearful storm that had overwhelmed Sodom of old. For instead of avoiding the sins of the Sodomites, they even exceeded them in their cruel ill-usage of helpless strangers."

14. "For the men of Sodom refused hospitality to strangers, to whom they were unknown and in no way indebted, but the Egyptians brought into cruel bondage a people who were not only their guests, but their benefactors." The Egyptians, in their ingratitude, forgot how Joseph had been a father to Pharaoh, and to all the land of Egypt. See Gen. xlv. 8. Exod. i. 8.

15, 16. "Besides this, it is evident that whatever visitation of judgment came upon the people of Sodom for their cruel reception of foreigners, the Egyptians merited a heavier one; for when the Is-

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respect shall be had of those, because they used strangers not friendly :

16 but these very grievously afflicted them, whom they had received with feastings, and were already made partakers of the same laws with them.

17 Therefore even with blindness were these stricken, as ^a those were at the doors of the righteous man : when, being compassed about with horrible great darkness, every one sought the passage of his own doors. ^a Gen. 19. 11.

18 For the elements were changed ² in themselves by a kind of harmony, like as in a psaltery notes change the name of the tune, and yet are always sounds ; which may well be perceived by the sight of the things that have been done. ² Gr. *bij themselves.*

19 For earthly things were turned into watery, and the things, that before swam in the water, now went upon the ground.

20 ^f The fire had power in the water, forgetting ^f ch. 16. 17.

“raelites came into Egypt, they had received them with festivities. and invited them to live with them under the same laws, and to become their fellowcitizens” (Gen. xlvii. 5, 6, 11.). “But, in violation of this covenant, they embittered their lives with hard labour” (Exod. i. 14.).

17. “Therefore they were likened to the Sodomites in their punishment, when they were plagued with darkness ; for as those wicked men were struck blind at the doors of just Lot” (Gen. xix. 10, 11.). “so the Egyptians were overwhelmed with a gloom that deprived them of speech, so that each of them sought the passage of his own doors.” The blindness of the men of Sodom kept them from finding Lot’s door ; but the darkness which fell on the Egyptians would not suffer them to return to their own doors.

18. “Also, as it was observed in xvi. 25, God, in His care for His people, re-arranged the order of the elements of nature without producing discord ; so that it was like the varying of tunes played upon the strings of a psaltery, which continue to be in harmony as before ; and this might be inferred from the things which were seen to happen.”

19. “For he turned the sea into dry land” (Ps. lxvi. 6.), “and thus men and beasts came into the place of the fish that replenish the waters, and the living things that swim in the sea migrated to the land.”

20, 21. “So in the plague of hail” (see above, xvi. 16.) “the fire retained its full force in the water, which seemed to suspend its power of quenching the flames ; and again, the fire, whilst it destroyed the flocks and crops of the Egyptians, seemed to spare the swarms of noxious animals which continued to infest them, though

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his own virtue: and the water forgot his own quenching nature.

¶ ch. 16. 22.

21 On the other side, the flames wasted not the flesh of the corruptible living things, though they walked therein; ^gneither melted they the icy kind of heavenly meat, that was of nature apt to melt.

22 For in all things, O Lord, thou didst magnify thy people, and glorify them, neither didst thou lightly regard them: but didst assist them in every time and place.

“they had bodies of flesh which were in no way proof against the “devouring element” (see xvi. 17, 18.). “Lastly, the element of fire “served the necessities of the Hebrews in the desert when they baked “the manna, for that ambrosial food was not melted, though it was “like ice in appearance, and was soon dissolved by the rays of the “sun.” This is repeated from xvi. 22—24. An ancient writer applies the description of the manna to the heavenly food of the Divine word, being fine, and subtle, penetrating the inmost parts of the soul, and cooling the ardour of passion. A cooling influence was also ascribed to the coriander seed.

22. “In all these ways God exalted His people, being present with “them in every time and place, and never casting them out of His “sight.” It has been observed, that within a short time after the author of Wisdom wrote this comparison between the portion of God’s people and their enemies, all this was reversed. When they had filled up the measure of their fathers by killing both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, they were like the people of Sodom and Egypt (Rev. xi. 8.), for the Divine wrath came upon them to the uttermost (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.). Their history after their rejection of the Lord Jesus, is as great a contrast to that of other nations, in respect of their dreadful calamities and unavenged wrongs, as their previous history had been by reason of their wonderful and unexpected deliverances, and the speedy vengeance which overtook their oppressors, and those who violated the sanctity of their Temple.

THE WISDOM OF JESUS THE SON OF SIRACH,
OR
ECCLESIASTICUS.

INTRODUCTION.

1. *Of the Name and Authorship of the Book.*—Of the two titles prefixed to it, the former,—“The Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach,”—is found in the Greek copies; the latter,—“Ecclesiasticus,”—in the Latin. Other Apocryphal Books, read in the public services of the Western Churches, were on that account called “Ecclesiastical,” to distinguish them from the “Canonical” Books, properly so named; but eventually this title was confined to the work before us, as being read, perhaps, more than the others, or as being held in greater esteem.^a The earliest distinct quotations from it occur in the writings of Clement of Alexandria; but from that time we find it frequently cited, and referred to in the same terms of respect as the Canonical Scriptures, though we have the distinct authority, both of St. Jerome and of St. Augustine, for asserting that the Church, in their day, did not receive it as such; nor was it ever included by the Jews in their Sacred Canon.

From the information given in the two Prologues (of which the latter, at least, may be regarded as authentic evidence), and in chap. l. 27, we learn that the author of the book was a Jew, then living at Alexandria, by name Jesus, son of Sirach; that he composed the book in Hebrew, but did not publish nor, indeed, complete it; that many years after his death the MS. fell into the hands of his grandson, also (if we can trust the former Prologue) named Jesus, and son of a father named Sirach, which Sirach must therefore have been a son of the elder Jesus; that this grandson, who had come into Egypt in his thirty-eighth year,^b during the reign of Ptolemy Physcon (Euergetes II.), and therefore between B.C. 170 and B.C. 117, translated it into Greek, and published the translation, probably with some additions of his own, for the benefit of his fellow-countrymen, and especially of those who, residing in Alexandria and elsewhere, spoke and understood Greek better than their own original tongue.

Like the preceding Book of Wisdom, this also has been sometimes

^a It was also sometimes called, from its contents, “Panaretos,” or “Whole Duty of Man.”

^b Some authorities (among whom is Fritzsche) are of opinion that this date refers to the thirty-eighth year of King Euergetes. See Dean Stanley’s *Jewish Church*, iii. 266, *Note*. On the other hand, Canon Westcott (*Bible Dict.*, i. 479, *Note*),

contents for the interpretation given above; and Dr. Scrivener (*Introd.*, p. lxii.), concurs in the same view. He adds, “For B.C. 133 (in the *Margin* of the “second Prologue), we should probably “read some earlier time.” Compare the date given in the *Margin* of our translation (from Bishop Lloyd’s Bible, 1701), “B.C., cir. 200.”

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attributed to Solomon, and is quoted as his by several of the Christian Fathers; but the internal evidence (see especially chaps. xlvi.—l.) is alone sufficient to disprove such a supposition. That the author was ambitious of imitating the known compositions of Solomon may be readily allowed; he may also have cast his work into a metrical form, like that of the Proverbs and of the Song of Solomon. In the Alexandrian MS. the writing is arranged as if the original had been so composed; and the same arrangement has been followed by Fritzsche, in his German translation, 1860, and in the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, edited by Dr. Scrivener, 1873. Compare Bishop Lowth, *De Sacrá Poesi Hebr. Præl.*, xxiv.

2. *Of the Contents and Character of the Work.*—Looking to the contents, we soon discover that, although put together in a less desultory manner than the Proverbs of Solomon, it has, upon the whole, little title to the merit of “orderly compilation,” claimed for it in the former of the two Prologues. Originally, indeed, it would seem that some attempt had been made to classify the subject-matter under certain general heads, several titles indicative of such an arrangement having been preserved in some of the oldest Greek MSS. See xviii. 30; xx. 27; xxiii. 7; xxiv. 1; xxx. 1, 14; xxxiii. 24; xxxiv. 1; xlv. 1; li. 1. But there are not a few instances in which the author, after passing to other topics, reverts to one formerly treated; e.g.: On the Praises of Wisdom, see i. 2; vi. 18; xiv. 20; xix. 18. On the Duties of Children to their Parents, see iii. 1; vii. 27; xxxiv. On the Duties of Friendship, see vii. 18; ix. 10; xxii. 20; xxvi. 16; xxxvii. 1. On the Reward of Almsgiving, see iii. 30; xxix. 9. On True and False Shame, see iv. 20; xxix. 9. Moreover, the latter portion of the work, from xlii. 15 to the end, differs materially, both in style and matter, from all that precedes it; and of this portion, “The Praise of Famous Men” (xlv.—l. 24.) may be said to form a whole in itself.

On these and other accounts it has been suspected that the compiler made use of several smaller collections to complete the unfinished work of his grandfather. Compare xxxiii. 16. However this may be, the main divisions of the work are sufficiently obvious. Beginning (1.) with the Divine origin and primary characteristics of true wisdom, it (2.) proceeds (chap. iii.) to deliver a variety of useful precepts, religious, moral, social or relative, and economical, up to chap. xxiv. At that chapter (3.) Wisdom is introduced, as speaking in her own person, to ver. 23; after which a fresh series of maxims, more or less similar to the preceding, is commenced and carried on to xlii. 15. Then (4.) follows a panegyric upon the works and greatness of God, which is (5.) succeeded by a commemoration of Hebrew worthies, from Enoch and Noah down to the writer's own time, xlv.—l. 25; when (6.) he comes forward, in a few verses, to sum up the work, which (7.) is finally concluded in chap. li. with a solemn form of prayer and thanksgiving.

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Such is a brief outline of this book in its leading features; and, whatever may be said of differences or of disorder in the compilation of the several parts, there can be but one opinion of its very great merits and excellency as a whole; and these, indeed, have been fully recognised no less in modern^c than in ancient times. To quote the remarks made concerning it in a recent publication: "The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach is replete with wise and thoughtful maxims, drawn from a deep insight into human nature. In it is also found noble imaginative writing; and its enthusiastic remembrances of Jewish history are well calculated to impress the reader's mind. Through this book and the Book of Wisdom beyond others, the preparation of faithful Israelites for the reception of the Gospel was continued during the last præ-Christian age. In them the transition of the sacred language from Hebrew to Greek was indicated and begun."^d In the judgment of Dr. Scrivener, "Ecclesiasticus and the First Book of the Maccabees are among the noblest of uninspired compositions; if, indeed, their authors, so full of faith and holy fear, can be regarded as entirely uninspired."^e Another living writer, entering into more detail, sets forth, with characteristic eloquence, the various topics and merits of the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach as follows.

After comparing this book with the Book of Wisdom, which, though now placed before it, followed it in point of time, "at how long an interval we know not," and after describing the former as "the recommendation of the theology of Palestine to Alexandria," and the latter as "the recommendation of the theology of Alexandria to Palestine," he proceeds:—"In some respects the Book of the Son of Sirach is but a repetition of the ancient writings of Solomon. In some of its maxims it sinks below the dignity of those writings by the homeliness of its details for guidance of behaviour at meals, of commercial speculations, of social advancement. But its general tone is worthy of that first contact between the two great civilizations of the ancient world, and breathes a spirit which an Isaiah would not have condemned, nor a Sophocles or a Theophrastus have despised. There is not a word in it to countenance the minute casuistries of the later Rabbis, or the metaphysical subtleties of the later Alexandrians. It pours out its whole strength in discussing the conduct of human life, or the direction of the soul to noble aims. Here first in the sacred books we find the full delineation of the idea of education (iv. 17, 18; vi. 28, 29.). Here is the measure of true nobleness (x. 23—25.). Here is the backbone of the honest love of truth (iv. 25, 26, 28.). There is a tender compassion which reaches far into the future religion of mankind (iv. 8, 10.). If there is at times the mournful and hope-

^c Addison's high estimate of it in the *Spectator*, No. 68, is well known.

^d *Revision of the Church Lectionary.*

By Five Clergymen. London, 1877.

^e *Cambridge Paraphrase Bible, Introd.,*

p. lxvi.

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"less view of life and of death which pervades the earlier Preacher" (xli. 1.), yet, on the whole, the tone is one of vigorous, magnanimous action.

"He must have been a delightful teacher who could so write of filial affection (iii. 12—15; vii. 27, 28.), and of friendship in all its forms" (vi. 14, 15; ix. 10; xix. 13, 14; xxxvii. 2.), and so rise above the harshness of his relations with his slaves (iv. 30; vii. 21; x. 25.). "He must have seen deep into the problems of social life, who could contrast as keenly as Bacon or Goethe the judgments of the uneducated many and the highly educated few (xxxviii. 24—xxxix. 11.). "Yet, in the midst of these homely and varied experiences, which belong only to the imitator of the wise king, a voice as of the prophet and the psalmist is still heard. Again and again the strain is raised such as Amos and Isaiah had lifted up, and not the less impressive for the quiet soberness with which it is urged. It is the same doctrine of the substitution of the moral duties for the ceremonial. The true 'atonement' for sins is declared to be, not the dumb sacrifices in the Temple courts,"—though it is to be hoped there were still faithful worshippers not a few, like Simeon and Anna, looking for redemption in Jerusalem, to whom those sacrifices spoke according to their true import,—“but the honour to parents, the giving of alms (iii. 3, 4, 30.). The trust in oblations, the recklessness of reliance on the mere mercy of God, are solemnly discountenanced (v. 5, 6; vii. 9, 10; xxxv. 1—7.). And underneath all this there still burns the gentle flame of hope and resignation (ii. 4—18.). Both by precept and example there is no more exalted description of the true greatness of prayer (xxiii. 1—6; xxxv. 17.).

"But there is yet another characteristic of the Son of Sirach more peculiarly his own. As the philosophy of the Hebrew Scriptures is contained in the larger part of the book,—possibly from older documents,—so their poetry finds a voice in the conclusion, which is, beyond question, original. It is the Song of Praise which, beginning with the glories of the Creation, breaks forth into that 'Hymn of the Forefathers,' as it is called in its ancient title, to which there is no parallel in the Old Testament, but of which the catalogue of the worthies of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews is an obvious imitation (xlii. 15 to end of l.). Here, and here only, is a full expression given to that natural instinct of reverence for the mighty dead which has in these striking words been heard from generation to generation in the festivals of the great benefactors of Christendom, or when the illustrious of the earth are committed to the grave (chap. xliv.)."^f

To these just and comprehensive remarks it has only to be added that expectation of the promised Messiah may be traced (xxxvi. 8, 11, 16.);

^f Stanley's *Jewish Church*, Vol. III., pp. 270—272.

that the Divine mercy is represented as extending to all mankind (xviii. 13.); that the certainty of a future state would seem to be implied (xlviii. 11. though that text is disputed), in which the true servants of God shall be rewarded (i. 13; xi. 26.) and the wicked punished (xli. 9.). However, room was still left for life and immortality to be brought more fully to light through the Gospel (ix. 12; xvii. 28, 30; xli. 4.).

For references to the Old Testament, see xiv. 17; xvi. 7; xvii. 1; xxiii. 10; xlv.—xlix., *passim*.

3. *Of the Text.*—There are great difficulties in ascertaining the true text of this book in many parts. How long the original Hebrew, which St. Jerome appears to have seen,² may have been preserved we cannot tell; the Greek is now the only original, and, in the several Greek MS. copies which have come down to us, there are great variations, not only in arrangement (especially from chaps. xxx. to xxxv. inclusive), but in substance,—entire sentences which are found in some being omitted in others. It would seem as if the transcribers, looking to the main character of the work as a collection of apothegms, had, on this account, allowed themselves to deal with it far more freely than they would otherwise have ventured to do. Nor do we gain much advantage in our endeavours to ascertain the true readings from the old Eastern Versions, which sometimes differ so much from the Greek that it is scarcely conceivable they should have been made from it; and yet there is no reason to believe that they were translated from any Hebrew copy. The same may be said also of the Latin Versions, including the Vulgate, which, while they differ largely from the Oriental, sometimes add whole sentences which have nothing to answer them in the Greek.

The Old English Versions, as Coverdale's and the Bishops' Bible, generally followed the Latin Vulgate too exclusively. Our last translators have done much to correct this error by paying more just deference to the Greek copies; but, on the other hand, by adopting too often the readings of the Complutensian text, they have been led to insert not a few passages which are wanting in the best MSS., and can only be regarded as interpolations. The most important of these have been pointed out in the *Notes*. The text of the LXX. therein referred to is that printed at Oxford, in 1859, at the expense of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; and when it is said that such a verse, or part of a verse, "is not in the LXX.," it is not meant that it is not to be found in *any* MS. or edition of the Greek text (for the interpolations occur for the most part in the text adopted by the Complutensian editors), but not in that recension of it which is now generally received among scholars as the most trustworthy.

² *Præf. in Libr. Salom.*, Vol. IX., p. 1,242. Ed. Migne.

A¹ Prologue made by an uncertain Author.

Some refer
this Pro-
logue to
Athanasius,
because it is
found in his
Synopsis.

¹ Or,
collected.

THIS Jesus was the son of Sirach, and grandchild to Jesus of the same name with him: this man therefore lived in the latter times, after the people had been led away captive, and called home again, and ² almost after all the prophets. Now his grandfather Jesus, as he himself witnesseth, was a man of great diligence and wisdom among the Hebrews, who did not only gather the grave and short sentences of wise men that had been before him, but himself also uttered some of his own, full of much understanding and wisdom. ³ When as therefore the first Jesus died, leaving this book ⁴ almost || perfected, Sirach his son receiving it after him left it to his own son Jesus, who, having gotten it into his hands, ⁵ compiled it all orderly into one volume, and called it Wisdom, intituling it both by his own name, his father's name, and his grandfather's; alluring the hearer by the very name of Wisdom to have a greater love to the study of this book. It containeth therefore wise sayings, dark sentences, and parables, and certain particular ancient godly stories of men that pleased God; also his prayer and song; moreover, what benefits God had vouchsafed his people, and what plagues he had heaped upon their enemies. This Jesus did imitate Solomon, and ⁶ was no less famous for wisdom and learning, both being indeed a man of great learning, and so reputed also.

¹ This Prologue does not appear in the LXX., or in the Vulgate; but is to be found in the Greek Version given in the Complutensian Polyglot. It adds little to the information given in the genuine Prologue (see below), and was written, probably, long afterwards. See *Margin*. The *Synopsis of Holy Scripture*, though printed among the works of St. Athanasius, is of doubtful authorship.

² "Almost after all the prophets." The word "almost" is not in the text, as given in the best editions of St. Athanasius.

³ "When as." See xxxiii. 7. St. Matt. i. 18.

⁴ "Almost perfected." These words are not in the text of the best editions of the *Synopsis*.

⁵ "Compiled it all orderly," &c. The book, as we now have it, does not answer to this description, the order of the materials, in several parts, having apparently undergone some disarrangement.

⁶ "Was no less famous," &c. Rather, "Was no less preeminent."

The ¹ Prologue of the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach.

WHEREAS many and great things have been delivered unto us by the law and the prophets, and by others that have followed their steps, for the which things Israel ought to be commended for learning and wisdom; and whereof not only the readers must needs become skilful themselves, but also they that desire to learn be able to profit them which are || without, both by speaking and writing: || Or, of another nation.

my grandfather Jesus, when he had much given himself to the reading of the law, and the prophets, and other books of our fathers, and had gotten therein good judgment, was drawn on also himself to write something pertaining to learning and wisdom; to the intent that those which are desirous to learn, and are addicted to these things, might profit much more in living according to the law. Wherefore let me intreat you to read it with favour and attention, and to pardon us, wherein we may seem to come short of some words, which we have laboured to interpret. For the same things uttered in Hebrew, and translated into another tongue, have not the same force in them: and not only these things, but the law itself, and the † prophets, and the rest of the books, have no small || difference, when || Or, excellency.

they are spoken in their own language. For in the eighth and thirtieth year coming into Egypt, ² when cir. 133.

Euergetes was king, and continuing there some time, I found a || book of no small learning: therefore I || Or, help of learning.

thought it most necessary for me to bestow some diligence and travail to interpret it; using great watchfulness and skill ³ in that space to bring the

¹ In this Prologue, the writer gives the history of the authorship of the following book, he himself having performed the part of translator only. Compare l. 27.

² "When Euergetes was king." This is commonly supposed to refer to Ptolemy Physcon, the second of the Ptolemies, who received the surname of Euergetes. The date given in the *Margin* is understood to represent the thirty-eighth year of his reign. But some suppose that the writer is speaking of his own age. See *Introduction*.

³ "In that space;" i.e. during the time he continued in Egypt.

ECCLESIASTICUS, I.

book to an end, and set it forth for them also, which in a strange country are willing to learn, being⁴ prepared before in manners to live after the law.

CHAPTER I.

1 *All wisdom is from God.* 10 *He giveth it to them that love him.* 12 *The fear of God is full of many blessings.* 28 *To fear God without hypocrisy.*

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

^a 1 Kin. 3. 9.
James 1. 5.

ALL^a wisdom cometh from the Lord, and is with him for ever.

2 Who can number the sand of the sea, and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity?

3 Who can find out the height of heaven, and the breadth of the earth, and the deep, and wisdom?

4 Wisdom hath been created before all things, and the understanding of prudence from everlasting.

5 The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom; and her ways are everlasting commandments.

^b Is. 40. 13.
Wisd. 9. 13.
Rom. 11. 34.
1 Cor. 2. 16.

6 ^bTo whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed? or who hath known her wise counsels?

7 [Unto whom hath the knowledge of wisdom been made manifest? and who hath understood her great experience?]

8 There is one wise and greatly to be feared, the Lord sitting upon his throne.

⁴ "Being prepared before," &c. From hence, it appears that the translation thus made into Greek was intended for foreign Jews, and proselytes who did not understand Hebrew.

CHAPTER I.

1. "All wisdom," &c. Compare Prov. ii. 6; viii. 22. Wisd. vii. 25; ix. 4.

2, 3. To do these things exceeds the power of the wisest man, and belongs to God alone.

4. All created things being the effects of God's wisdom and prudence, or providence, His wisdom and providence must have existed before all things.

5. This verse is not in the LXX. Both clauses have the same meaning; viz. If we desire to attain to wisdom, and her ways, we must keep God's word and commandments, which are of everlasting obligation. See below, ver. 16.

7. This verse is not in the LXX., or in the Arabic and Syriac Versions; and appears to have crept into the text from the margin.

8—13. Though the wisdom of God is abundantly visible in the inanimate creation, yet it is seen and abides most "with all flesh," and, most of

ECCLESIASTICUS, I.

9 He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his works.

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CHRIST
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10 She *is* with all flesh according to his gift, and he hath given her to them that love him.

11 The fear of the Lord is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of rejoicing.

12 The fear of the Lord maketh a merry heart, and giveth joy, and gladness, and a long life.

13 Whoso feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last, and he ²shall find favour in the day of his death.

² Or, shall
be blessed.

14 ^cTo fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom : and it was created with the faithful in the womb.

^c Ps. 111. 10.
Prov. 1. 7.
& 9. 10.

15 She hath built an everlasting foundation with men, and she shall continue ^dwith their seed.

^d 2 Chron.
20. 21.

16 To fear the Lord is fulness of wisdom, and filleth men with her fruits.

17 She filleth all their house with things desirable, and the garners with her increase.

18 The fear of the Lord is a crown of wisdom, making peace and perfect health to flourish ; both which are the gifts of God : and it enlargeth their rejoicing that love him.

19 Wisdom raineth down skill and knowledge of understanding, and exalteth them to honour that hold her fast.

20 The root of wisdom is to fear the Lord, and the branches thereof are long life.

21 The fear of the Lord driveth away sins : and where it is present, it turneth away wrath.

all, with them that love and fear Him ; and its blessed *effects*, as produced in them and for them, are described in vv. 11—13.

12. "A long life." See Prov. iii. 2, 16 ; and below, ver. 20.

14. "And it was created," &c. In illustration of the sentiment suggested here and in the following verse, that early piety is a special gift of God, see Job xxxi. 18. Wisd. viii. 19, 20 ; also Jer. i. 5. Luke i. 15. And, on the other hand, that original sin may be early aggravated, see Ps. lvi. 3.

15. "With men ;" i.e. "with the faithful." See foregoing verse.

17. "Her increase." Because she "hath the promise of the life that now is," as well as "of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8.).

18. "Both which," &c. The remainder of this verse is not in the LXX.

21. See Prov. xvi. 6, "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil," and consequently they have no occasion to fear His "wrath ;"

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² Or, *escape
punishment.*

22 A furious man cannot ² be justified; for the sway of his fury shall be his destruction.

23 A patient man will bear for a time, and afterward joy shall spring up unto him.

24 He will hide his words for a time, and the lips of many shall declare his wisdom.

25 The parables of knowledge are in the treasures of wisdom: but godliness is an abomination to a sinner.

26 If thou desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee.

27 For the fear of the Lord is wisdom and instruction: and faith and meekness are his delight.

³ Or,
*Be not dis-
obedient to.*

28 ³ Distrust not the fear of the Lord when thou art poor: and come not unto him with a double heart.

29 Be not an hypocrite in the sight of men, and take good heed what thou speakest.

30 Exalt not thyself, lest thou fall, and bring dishonour upon thy soul, and so God discover thy secrets, and cast thee down in the midst of the congregation, because thou camest not in truth to the fear of the Lord, but thy heart is full of deceit.

CHAPTER II.

¹ *God's servants must look for trouble, 7 and be patient, and trust in him. 12 For woe to them that do not so. 15 But they that fear the Lord will do so.*

on the contrary, they may be assured of His favour. This verse, however, is not in the LXX.; and the latter clause is wanting in the Vulgate also.

22. "A furious man," &c. The original text is here uncertain; but the intention of this and the two following verses appears to be, to set forth the evil effects which are wont to arise when the fear of the Lord is absent, and the good effects which result when it is present, and is seen more especially in the control of the temper, in patience, and forbearance.

25. "But godliness," &c. See Wisd. ii. 12—16.

26. See xxi. 11. Eccles. ii. 26. John vii. 17.

28. "Distrust not," &c. This and the two following verses contain cautions against the profession of the fear of the Lord without the reality. The clause, "when thou art poor," is not found in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

30. Nothing is more indispensable for one who professes to fear God than humility; and he that humbleth not himself before God, will be abased by Him, no less surely than a condemned criminal is publicly exposed and brought to punishment. See xxiii. 24. Prov. xxvi. 26.

ECCLESIASTICUS, II.

MY son, if ^a thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation.

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CHRIST
cir. 200.

2 Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure, and ² make not haste in time of trouble.

^a Matt. 4. 1.
2 Tim. 3. 12.
1 Pet. 4. 12.

3 Cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayest be increased at thy last end.

² Or,
haste not.

4 Whatsoever is brought upon thee take cheerfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate.

5 ^b For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.

^b Prov. 17. 3.
Wisd. 3. 6.

6 ^c Believe in him, and he will help thee; order thy way aright, and trust in him.

^c Ps. 37. 3, 5.

7 Ye that fear the Lord, ^d wait for his mercy; and go not aside, lest ye fall.

^d Ps. 37. 7.

8 Ye that fear the Lord, believe him; and your reward shall not fail.

9 Ye that fear the Lord, hope for good, and for everlasting joy and mercy.

10 Look at the generations of old, and see; ^e did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his fear, and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise, that called upon him?

^e Ps. 37. 25.

11 ^f For the Lord is full of compassion and mercy, longsuffering, and very pitiful, and forgiveth sins, and saveth in time of affliction.

^f Ps. 86. 15.
& 145. 8.

12 Woe be to fearful hearts, and faint hands, and the sinner that goeth two ways!

CHAPTER II.

1. The obligation and the benefits and blessings of the fear of God, which is the only true wisdom, having been set forth, generally, in the first chapter, the writer now proceeds to warn all who are willing to follow his instruction that they must not expect, in so doing, to escape the temptations and troubles of life; on the contrary, they must be prepared to meet them, with patience and resignation, in the full assurance that God will support them under their trials, and in the end abundantly reward them, if they faint not. See ver. 8.

2. "Make not haste," but "tarry the Lord's leisure," who will come to thy relief in His own good time. See Ps. xxvii. 16; and Is. xxviii. 16, "he that believeth shall not make haste."

7. "Go not aside;" i.e. from the straight path of duty.

10. "Look at the generations of old . . . did ever any trust in the Lord," &c. John Bunyan, author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, found great comfort in this text, and "thanked God for it." See his *Autobiography*, quoted in Dean Stanley's *Jewish Church*, Vol. III., p. 265.

12. In this and the two following verses the writer sets forth the

ECCLESIASTICUS, III.

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13 Woe unto him that is fainthearted! for he believeth not; therefore shall he not be defended.

14 Woe unto you that have lost patience! and what will ye do when the Lord shall visit you?

15 They that fear the Lord will not disobey his word; and ^sthey that love him will keep his ways.

16 They that fear the Lord will seek that which is wellpleasing unto him; and they that love him shall be filled with the law.

17 They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and humble their souls in his sight,

^h 2 Sam. 24.
14.

18 *saying*, We will ^hfall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men: for as his majesty is, so is his mercy.

CHAPTER III.

2 Children must honour and help both their parents. 21 We may not desire to know all things. 26 The incorrigible must needs perish. 30 Alms are rewarded.

HEAR me your father, O children, and do thereafter, that ye may be safe.

^a Ex. 20. 12.
Deut. 5. 16.
Matt. 15. 4.
Mark 7. 10.
Eph. 6. 2.

2 For the Lord hath given ^athe father honour over the children, and hath confirmed the ²authority of the mother over the sons.

² Or,
judgment.

3 Whoso honoureth his father maketh an atonement for his sins:

woful consequences to be apprehended by those who disregard the instruction he has just given.

14. "Visit you;" i.e. in His anger, and shall judge you according to your works.

16. "Shall be filled;" i.e. as by obedience to the law of God men come to love Him, so by loving Him they shall be enabled to obey the law more fully and perfectly.

17. See the reference in the margin to the words of David when he was "in a great strait."

CHAPTER III.

1. The writer goes on to specify certain duties, the performance of which is indispensable for those who profess to fear the Lord. And first, speaking as a father to his children, he enjoins obedience to the fifth commandment (vv. 1—16.).

3. "Maketh an atonement," &c. According to the Vulgate, the sense is the same as in ver. 5, "when he maketh his prayer, he shall be heard." Compare John ix. 31; and see below, ver. 30. But compare ver. 15.

ECCLESIASTICUS, III.

4 and he that honoureth his mother is as one that layeth up treasure.

5 Whoso honoureth his father shall have joy of *his own* children; and when he maketh his prayer, he shall be heard.

6 He that honoureth his father shall have a long life; and he that is obedient unto the Lord shall be a comfort to his mother.

7 He that feareth the Lord will honour his father, and will do service unto his parents, as to his masters.

8 ^b Honour thy father and mother both in word ^{b ver. 2.} and deed, that a blessing may come upon thee from them.

9 For ^c the blessing of the father establisheth the houses of children; but the curse of the mother rooteth out foundations. ^{c Gen. 27. 27, 28, 29. Deut. 33. 1.}

10 Glory not in the dishonour of thy father; for thy father's dishonour is no glory unto thee.

11 For the glory of a man is from the honour of his father; and a mother in dishonour is a reproach to the children.

12 My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth.

13 And if his understanding fail, have patience with him; and despise him not when thou art ² in ^{2 Or, in all thine ability.} thy full strength.

14 For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten: and instead of sins it shall be added to build thee up.

15 In the day of thine affliction it shall be remembered; thy sins also shall melt away, as the ice in the fair warm weather.

16 He that forsaketh his father is as a blas-

4. See Matt. vi. 20; xix. 21. 1 Tim. vi. 19.

13. No frailties or infirmities on the part of a parent can justify children in treating him with contempt, or in withholding from him the honour that is his due. See Gen. ix. 20—27.

14. "And instead of sins," &c. The text here admits of doubt, and the Vulgate gives quite a different interpretation.

15. "Thy sins also shall melt away," &c. In the Arabic Version the sense of the verse is as follows: "In affliction there shall be to thee "a Helper; and He shall drive away evils from thee, as cold is driven "away by the vehemence of heat." But compare above, ver. 3.

ECCLESIASTICUS, III.

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CHRIST
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phemer ; and he that angereth his mother is cursed of God.

17 My son, go on with thy business in meekness ; so shalt thou be beloved of him that is approved.

d Phil. 2. 3.

18 ^dThe greater thou art, the more humble thyself, and thou shalt find favour before the Lord.

e Ps. 25. 9, 14.

19 Many are in high place, and of renown : but ^emysteries are revealed unto the meek.

20 For the power of the Lord is great, and he is honoured of the lowly.

f Prov. 25 27.
Rom. 12. 3.

21 ^fSeek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength.

22 But what is commanded thee, think thereupon *with reverence* ; for it is not needful for thee *to see with thine eyes* the things that are in secret.

23 Be not curious in unnecessary matters : for more things are shewed unto thee than men understand.

24 For many are deceived by their own vain opinion ; and an evil suspicion hath overthrown their judgment.

25 Without eyes thou shalt want light : profess not the knowledge therefore that thou hast not.

26 A stubborn heart shall fare evil at the last ; and he that loveth danger shall perish therein.

17. Next after obedience to parents (see *Note* on ver. 1.), the practice of meekness and lowliness (vv. 17—20.), of abstinence from vain curiosity, from arrogance and pride (vv. 21—29.), and, lastly, almsgiving and tender consideration for the poor and needy (ver. 30 ; iv. 1—10.), are insisted on as necessary fruits of the fear of God.

“Of him that is approved.” That is, by all such as are themselves approved, for their good qualities, by God and man.

19. “Mysteries are revealed,” &c. See Matt. xi. 25. But this verse is not in the LXX.

24. “An evil suspicion,” &c. Rather, “a wrong notion,” or a presumption adopted out of prejudice or self-conceit.

25. It is as idle to profess knowledge which we have not, as to profess to see when we have not eyes, or have lost the use of them. But this verse is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

26—28. The connection of the sense requires that “the stubborn heart,” the “obstinate heart,” “the wicked,” and “the proud,” should be understood more particularly of those who persist in rejecting the instruction of wisdom as before given ; while, in ver. 29, “the heart of the prudent,” and “an attentive ear,” are to be understood of the contrary character.

ECCLESIASTICUS, IV.

27 An obstinate heart shall be laden with sorrows ; and the wicked man shall heap sin upon sin.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

28 ² In the punishment of the proud there is no remedy ; for the plant of wickedness hath taken root in him.

² Or, *The proud man is not healed by his punishment.*

29 The heart of the prudent will understand a parable ; and an attentive ear is the desire of a wise man.

30 ⁵ Water will quench a flaming fire ; and alms maketh an atonement for sins.

⁵ Ps. 41. 1, &c.
Dan. 4. 27.
Matt. 5. 7.

31 And he that requiteth good turns is mindful of that which may come hereafter ; and when he falleth, he shall find a stay.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *We may not despise the poor or fatherless, 11 but seek for wisdom, 20 and not be ashamed of some things, nor gainsay the truth, 30 nor be as lions in our houses.*

MY son, defraud not the poor of his living, and make not the needy eyes to wait long.

2 Make not an hungry soul sorrowful ; neither provoke a man in his distress.

3 Add not more trouble to an heart that is vexed ; and ^a defer not to give to him that is in need.

^a Prov. 3. 27,
28.

4 Reject not the supplication of the afflicted ; neither turn away thy face from a poor man.

5 ^b Turn not away thine eye from ³ the needy, and give him none occasion to curse thee :

^b Tobit 4. 7.
Matt. 5. 42.

6 ^c for if he curse thee in the bitterness of his soul, his prayer shall be heard of him that made him.

³ Or, *him that asketh.*
^c Deut. 15. 9.

30. "And an alms maketh an atonement," &c. See above, ver. 3, where the LXX. have the same word as here, "shall appease;" i.e. shall make God propitious towards the sinner. Of course, with the reflected light of the Gospel, we understand that in order to have this blessed effect, the alms must be accompanied by true repentance for the sins, and be offered in the faith of Jesus Christ, the only propitiation for all sin. See Rom. iii. 25. 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10. At the same time, in the Gospel (Luke xi. 41.) "we are taught that merciful alms-dealing is profitable "to purge the soul from the infection and filthy spots of sin." See *Homily of Alms-Deeds, Part II.*

CHAPTER IV.

1. The same subject is continued from the two last verses of the foregoing chapter. See *Note, Ibid., v. 17.*

6. See in Exod. xxii. 22, 23, the declaration of God Himself, which,

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7 Get thyself the love of the congregation, and bow thy head to a great man.

8 Let it not grieve thee to bow down thine ear to the poor, and give him a friendly answer with meekness.

^d Is. 1. 17.
Jer. 22. 3.

9 ^d Deliver him that suffereth wrong from the hand of the oppressor; and be not fainthearted when thou sittest in judgment.

^e Job 29. 16.
& 31. 18.
Is. 1. 17.
James 1. 27.

10 ^e Be as a father unto the fatherless, and instead of an husband unto their mother: so shalt thou be as the son of the most High, and he shall love thee more than thy mother doth.

11 Wisdom exalteth her children, and layeth hold of them that seek her.

^f Prov. 3. 13.

12 ^f He that loveth her loveth life; and they that seek to her early shall be filled with joy.

13 He that holdeth her fast shall inherit glory; and wheresoever she entereth, the Lord will bless.

^g Or, in the
sanctuary.

14 They that serve her shall minister ² to the Holy One: and them that love her the Lord doth love.

15 Whoso giveth ear unto her shall judge the nations: and he that attendeth unto her shall dwell securely.

16 If a man commit himself unto her, he shall

however, is here somewhat exaggerated. Also Deut., as in *Margin*, and Prov. xxviii. 27. The writer of the *Homily of Alms-Deeds*, Part I., in quoting this verse, remarks: "We know that the prayers which the poor make for us shall be acceptable and regarded of God; their complaint shall be heard also."

7, 8. Be considerate and courteous to all classes,—to the poor and those beneath thee; but also to those who are thy superiors, and as such are entitled to due respect.

9. "Be not fainthearted when," &c. Be not influenced by weakness or fear to condemn the innocent, or to acquit the guilty.

11. "Layeth hold," &c.; i.e. to help and protect them. From this verse to ver. 20, the writer, interrupting the course of his instruction in regard to the particulars of religious duty, recurs to the subject of the first chapter, viz. the benefits and blessings bestowed on those who are the children of "wisdom."

14. "They that serve her shall," &c. Shall be as "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God." See 1 Pet. ii. 5.

15. "Shall judge the nations;" i.e. shall alone be fit and able so to do. See Wisd. iii. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 2.

16. He shall not only inherit her, as his own possession, but she shall become as an heirloom in his family through the influences of good

ECCLESIASTICUS, IV.

inherit her; and his generation shall hold her in possession.

^a Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

17 For at the first she will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline, until she may trust his soul, and try him by her laws.

18 Then will she return the straight way unto him, and comfort him, and shew him her secrets.

19 But if he go wrong, she will forsake him, and give him over to his own ruin.

20 Observe the opportunity, and beware of evil; and be not ashamed when it concerneth thy soul.

21 For there is a shame that bringeth sin; and there is a shame which is glory and grace.

22 Accept no person against thy soul, and let not the reverence of any man cause thee to fall.

23 And refrain not to speak, ²when there is occasion ²Gr. *in time of saving.* to do good, and hide not thy wisdom in her beauty.

24 For by speech wisdom shall be known: and learning by the word of the tongue.

25 In no wise speak against the truth; but be abashed of the error of thine ignorance.

26 Be not ashamed to confess thy sins; ³and force ³Or, *and strive not against the stream.* not the course of the river.

example and pious education. For "generation" the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, 1873, reads "generations."

17. This and the next verse explain the process by which she becomes his possession; a process rough and unattractive at first, but afterward it yieldeth the fruit of Divine "comfort" to them that are exercised thereby. See Heb. xii. 11.

20. From this verse the writer resumes the instruction he has to give to those who desire to learn the lessons of true wisdom; warning them against false shame, both of action and speech (vv. 20—26.), undue respect of persons (vv. 27, 28.), and other faults of temper and character in domestic and social intercourse (vv. 29—31.).

"When it concerneth thy soul." Let not false shame betray thee into action, which may endanger thy salvation. See xlii. 1, 8. But the translation of this clause is doubtful.

22. "Reverence of any man;" i.e. which thou payest to any man. But the Vulgate gives a different sense throughout the verse.

23. "In her beauty." The text is here uncertain; but the general sentiment is sufficiently clear, and is expanded in the next verse.

26. When your conscience is pricked with a sense of sin, or when you are admonished of your faults, be ready to acknowledge them; and by no means attempt to stifle conscience, or to justify what you have done amiss, which would be as vain and useless as it is wrong.

ECCLESIASTICUS, V.

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27 Make not thyself an underling to a foolish man; neither accept the person of the mighty.

28 Strive for the truth unto death, and the Lord shall fight for thee.

ε James 1. 19. 29 ^g Be not hasty in thy tongue, and in thy deeds slack and remiss.

30 Be not as a lion in thy house, nor frantick among thy servants.

η Acts 20. 35. 31 ^h Let not thine hand be stretched out to receive, and shut when thou shouldest ² repay.

2 Or, give.

CHAPTER V.

1 *We must not presume of our wealth and strength, 6 nor of the mercy of God, to sin. 9 We must not be doubletongued, 12 nor answer without knowledge.*

α 1 Tim. 6. 17. ^a SET not thy heart upon thy goods; and say not, ^b I have enough for my life.

^b Luke 12.
15, 19.

γ Prov. 3. 5.

2 ^c Follow not thine own mind and thy strength, to walk in the ways of thy heart:

3 and say not, Who shall controul me for my works? for the Lord will surely revenge thy pride.

δ Eccles. 8.
11.

ε 2 Pet. 3. 9.

ζ Ex. 34. 7.
ch. 16. 13.

ς ch. 21. 1.

4 ^d Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath happened unto me? ^e for the Lord is longsuffering, ^f he will in no wise let thee go.

5 Concerning propitiation, ^g be not without fear to add sin unto sin:

27. "Neither accept the person," &c. "The mighty" is entitled to due respect (see above, ver. 7.); but to "accept his person" implies respect more than is due, shown merely on account of his outward qualities and condition, without consideration of his true character. See James ii. 1, 9. Jude 16.

30. "Nor frantick," &c. Rather, "suspicious," "distrustful."

CHAPTER V.

1. Paley has observed, in preaching upon vv. 5, 6, "I know not so much good advice drawn up in so little compass anywhere, as in this chapter; nor of that advice any part so important as the text" (*Works*, Vol. V., p. 167, *Serm.* xix.).

4. "For the Lord is longsuffering," &c. It does not therefore follow that he is indifferent or unobservant of thy ways; on the contrary, be assured he keeps His all-seeing eye upon thee, and "WILL IN NO WISE LET THEE GO" out of His sight; or go unpunished, if thou repent not.

5. "Concerning propitiation," &c.; and so the LXX. In the *Homily of Repentance*, Part III., the version is, "Because thy sins are forgiven thee," which gives the sense more clearly.

ECCLESIASTICUS, V.

6 and say not, His mercy is great; he will be pacified for the multitude of my sins: ^h for mercy and wrath come from him, and his indignation resteth upon sinners. ^{Before}
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^h ch. 16. 11,
12.

7 Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day: for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance.

8 ⁱ Set not thine heart upon goods unjustly gotten; for they shall not profit thee in the day of calamity. ⁱ Prov. 10. 2.
& 11. 4.
ⁱ Ezek. 7. 19.

9 Winnow not with every wind, and go not into every way: for so doth the sinner that hath a double tongue.

10 Be stedfast in thy understanding; and let thy word be the same.

11 ^k Be swift to hear; and let thy life be sincere; ^k and with patience give answer. ^k James 1. 19.
^l 1 Pet. 3. 15.

12 If thou hast understanding, answer thy neighbour; if not, lay thy hand upon thy mouth.

13 ^m Honour and shame is in talk: and the tongue of man is his fall. ^m Matt. 12.
37

14 ⁿ Be not called a whisperer, and lie not in wait with thy tongue: for a foul shame is upon the thief, and an evil condemnation upon the double tongue. ⁿ Rom. 1. 27.

6. "For mercy and wrath," &c. Not "mercy" only, but "wrath" also.

"Resteth upon sinners." The *Homily*, as above, reads, "unrepentant sinners."

7. "And in thy security," &c. This clause is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

9. "Winnow not with every wind." Be not inconstant and volatile in thy opinions and conduct. Compare Eph. iv. 14.

10. "Let thy word be the same." In LXX., "be one;" i.e. one and the same, not variable and inconstant.

11. "And let thy life be sincere." This clause is a manifest interpolation. It is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

13. The tongue of man is his fall; rather, "is to him an occasion of falling." See James iii. 6.

14. "A foul shame is upon the thief." This clause, taken with the context before and after, appears to suggest the comparison set forth in the *Homily against Contention*, Part I.: "Many times there cometh less hurt of a thief, than of a railing tongue: for the one taketh away a

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15 Be not ignorant of any thing in a great matter or a small.

CHAPTER VI.

2 Do not extol thine own conceit, 7 but make choice of a friend. 18 Seek wisdom betimes. 20 It is grievous to some, 28 yet the fruits thereof are pleasant. 35 Be ready to hear wise men.

INSTEAD of a friend become not an enemy; for [thereby] thou shalt inherit an ill name, shame, and reproach: even so shall a sinner that hath a double tongue.

2 Extol not thyself in the counsel of thine own heart; that thy soul be not torn in pieces as a bull [straying alone.]

3 Thou shalt eat up thy leaves, and lose thy fruit, and leave thyself as a dry tree.

4 A wicked soul shall destroy him that hath it, and shall make him to be laughed to scorn of his enemies.

² Gr. A sweet throat.

^a ch. 20. 13.

5 ^{2 a} Sweet language will multiply friends: and a fairspeaking tongue will increase kind greetings.

6 Be in peace with many: nevertheless have but one counsellor of a thousand.

“man’s good name, the other taketh but his riches, which is of much less value:” and by Shakspeare, in *Othello*, Act III., Sc. 3. :—

“Who steals my purse, steals trash;
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.” Compare xx. 25.

15. This version is in accordance with the LXX.; but the Vulgate gives a sense altogether different. Some render it, “Go not wrong,—“fail not in your duty,—in a great matter, or a small;” and refer it to faults of the tongue.

CHAPTER VI.

The first part of this chapter (vv. 1—17.), after exhorting to self-distrust, goes on to treat of the value and importance of friendship. Addison, in the *Spectator*, No. 68, has drawn attention to the excellent remarks and rules which it contains upon that subject.

1. Against inconstancy in friendship. This verse appears rather to belong to the foregoing chapter, with which in the LXX. it is connected by the conjunction “and.”

2. “As a bull.” The true interpretation here is very doubtful, the reading being also uncertain. In some editions the words are omitted.

3. “Thou shalt eat up thy leaves,” &c. By undue self-confidence, and self-conceit, thou shalt bring failure and disgrace upon thyself, and so become like “a dry tree,” devoid both of “leaves” and “fruit.”

ECCLESIASTICUS, VI.

7 If thou wouldest get a friend, ² prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him.

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8 For some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble.

² Or, get him
in the time of
trouble.

9 And there is a friend, who being turned to enmity and strife will discover thy reproach.

10 ^b Again, some friend is a companion at the table, and will not continue in the day of thy affliction.

^b ch. 37. 4, 5.

11 But in thy prosperity he will be as thyself, and will be bold over thy servants.

12 If thou be brought low, he will be against thee, and will hide himself from thy face.

13 Separate thyself from thine enemies, and take heed of thy friends.

14 A faithful friend is a strong defence: and he that hath found such an one hath found a treasure.

15 Nothing doth countervail a faithful friend, and his excellency is invaluable.

16 A faithful friend is the medicine of life; and they that fear the Lord shall find him.

17 Whoso feareth the Lord shall direct his friendship aright: for as he is, so shall his neighbour be also.

18 My son, gather instruction from thy youth up: so shalt thou find wisdom till thine old age.

19 Come unto her as one that ploweth and soweth, and wait for her good fruits: for thou shalt not toil much in labouring about her, but thou shalt eat of her fruits right soon.

20 She is very unpleasant to the unlearned: he

9. There is much diversity in the translation of this verse, the text being uncertain.

13. "Take heed of thy friends." Until they have been fully tried, care must be taken not to treat them with too much confidence, lest they prove unfaithful.

15. "Nothing doth countervail," &c.; i.e. is equivalent to.

17. "For as he is," &c. The neighbour whom, under the Divine guidance, he chooseth for a friend, shall be "as he is," that is, a second self, which is the perfection of a true friendship; or it may mean that the security of friendship is in the fact that both are God-fearing men.

19. "As one that ploweth," &c. Let thy diligence in coming to her be like that of the husbandman, and then thy recompence shall be, in all ordinary circumstances, speedy and certain like his.

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² Or, heart.
³ Zech. 12. 3.

that is without ² understanding will not remain with her.

21 She will lie upon him as a ⁶ mighty stone of trial; and he will cast her from him ere it be long.

22 For wisdom is according to her name, and she is not manifest unto many.

23 Give ear, my son, receive my advice, and refuse not my counsel,

³ Or, collar. 24 and put thy feet into her fetters, and thy neck into her ³ chain.

^d Matt. 11. 29. 25 Bow ^d down thy shoulder, and bear her, and be not grieved with her bonds.

26 Come unto her with thy whole heart, and keep her ways with all thy power.

27 Search, and seek, and she shall be made known unto thee: and when thou hast got hold of her, let her not go.

28 For at the last thou shalt find her rest, and that shall be turned to thy joy.

29 Then shall her fetters be a strong defence for thee, and her chains a robe of glory.

⁴ Or, a ribbon of blue silk, Num. 15. 38. 30 For there is a golden ornament upon her, and her bands are ⁴ purple lace.

31 Thou shalt put her on as a robe of honour, and shalt put her about thee as a crown of joy.

32 My son, if thou wilt, thou shalt be taught: and if thou wilt apply thy mind, thou shalt be prudent.

33 If thou love to hear, thou shalt receive understanding: and if thou bow thine ear, thou shalt be wise.

^e ch. 8. 9. 34 Stand in the multitude of the ^e elders; and cleave unto him that is wise.

21. See the reference to Zechariah in the *Margin*. According to Jerome, the comparison is derived from a gymnastic exercise, still practised in his time in Palestine, and similar to that which may be seen at athletic games in Scotland, where it is called "putting the stone."

22. "Wisdom is according to her name." As this book does not exist in the original Hebrew, or Syriac, the precise meaning of these words cannot be ascertained. The name of *wisdom* in Latin,—("sapientia"), being derived from "sapio," to taste, or relish, may give a notion of what is meant. It is not "many" who have a true taste for wisdom, or the fear of God.

23—31. These verses are an expansion of the sentiments expressed in iv. 11—18.

ECCLESIASTICUS, VII.

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35 Be willing to hear every godly discourse; and let not the parables of understanding escape thee.

36 And if thou seest a man of understanding, get thee betimes unto him, and let thy foot wear the steps of his door.

37 Let thy mind be upon the ordinances of the Lord, and ^fmeditate continually in his command-^f Ps. 1. 2.
ments: he shall establish thine heart, and give thee wisdom at thine own desire.

CHAPTER VII.

1 We are exhorted from sin, 4 from ambition, 8 presumption, 10 and fainting in prayer: 12 from lying and backbiting, 18 and how to esteem a friend: 19 a good wife: 20 a servant: 22 our cattle: 23 our children and parents: 31 the Lord and his priests: 32 the poor, and those that mourn.

DO no evil, ^aso shall no harm come unto thee. ^a 1 Pet. 3. 13.

2 Depart from the unjust, and iniquity shall turn away from thee.

3 My son, ^bsow not upon the furrows of unright-^b J. b 4. 8.
eousness, and thou shalt not reap them sevenfold. ^c Prov. 22. 8.

4 Seek not of the Lord preeminence, neither of the king the seat of honour.

5 ^cJustify not thyself before the Lord; and boast ^c Job 9. 20.
not of thy wisdom before the king. ^d Ps. 143. 2.
^e Eccles. 7. 16.
^f Luke 18. 11.

6 Seek not to be judge, being not able to take away iniquity; lest at any time ^dthou fear the person of ^d Lev. 19. 15.
the mighty, and lay a stumblingblock in the way of thy uprightness.

7 Offend not against the multitude of a city, and

CHAPTER VII.

This chapter contains a variety of precepts, necessary to be observed by all who desire to cultivate practical "wisdom" in the different circumstances and relations of life.

1. "So shall no harm," &c. Rather, "evil." In the Greek, the same word is repeated as applicable equally to "malum culpæ," "malum pœnæ," and "malum fortunæ;" and our word "evil" admits of the same uses. See Deut. vii. 15. Job ii. 10. Amos iii. 6.

2. "Depart from the unjust," &c. Rather, "from injustice, and it shall turn away from thee."

3. Add to the references in the *Margin*, Hos. x. 13. Gal. vi. 7, 8.

"And thou shalt not reap them sevenfold." But if otherwise, thou must expect so to reap.

6. "Being not able," &c. The Vulgate reads, "unless thou art able." Some interpret, "since thou mightest not be able to take away iniquity," i.e. by bringing it to deserved punishment. What follows is to be understood as the reason for the advice given.

ECCLESIASTICUS, VII.

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then thou shalt not cast thyself down among the people.

8 Bind not one sin upon another; for in one thou shalt not be unpunished.

• Prov. 21. 27. 9 ° Say not, God will look upon the multitude of my oblations, and when I offer to the most high God, he will accept it.

10 Be not fainthearted when thou makest thy prayer, and neglect not to give alms.

† 1 Sam. 2. 7. 11 Laugh no man to scorn in the bitterness of his soul: for † there is one which humbleth and exalteth.

‡ Gr. *Plow*
not. 12 ² Devise not a lie against thy brother; neither do the like to thy friend.

13 Use not to make any manner of lie: for the custom thereof is not good.

§ Eccles. 5. 2. § and make not ³ much babbling when thou prayest.
Matt. 6. 7.

¶ Or, *vain repetition.* 15 Hate not laborious work, neither husbandry,
h Gen. 3. 19, 23. h which the most High hath ⁴ ordained.

⁴ Gr. *created.* 16 Number not thyself among the multitude of sinners, but remember that wrath will not tarry long.

17 Humble thy soul greatly: for the vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms.

18 Change not a friend for any good by no means; neither a faithful brother for the gold of Ophir.

‡ Prov. 31. 10. 19 Forego not a wise and good woman: † for her grace is above gold.

ⁿ Lev. 19. 13. 20 ⁿ Whereas thy servant worketh truly, entreat
ch. 33. 30. him not evil, nor the hireling that bestoweth himself
& 34. 22. wholly for thee.

7. "And then thou shalt not," &c. Rather, in continuation of the advice, "and do not," i.e. by offending, "cast thyself down," &c.

10. "Be not fainthearted," &c.; i.e. easily discouraged. See St. Luke xviii. 1, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

13. "Is not good." Rather, "tendeth not to good."

16. "Will not tarry long." See Ezra vii. 26. St. Luke xviii. 8.

17. "Fire and worms." See Is. lxvi. 24. Judith xvi. 17. St. Matt. v. 22; xviii. 8, 9. St. Mark ix. 43—48. The preceding clause, "Humble thy soul greatly," appears to be intended to represent the general duty and necessity of repentance.

19. "Forego not;" literally, "do not miss," or neglect. It appears to refer to the choice of a wife. Compare ver. 26.

ECCLESIASTICUS, VII.

21 Let thy soul love a good servant, and defraud him not of liberty.

22 ¹ Hast thou cattle? have an eye to them: and if they be for thy profit, keep them with thee.

23 Hast thou children? ^m instruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth.

24 Hast thou daughters? have a care of their body, and shew not thyself cheerful toward them.

25 Marry thy daughter, and so shalt thou have performed a weighty matter: but give her to a man of understanding.

26 Hast thou a wife after thy mind? forsake her not: but give not thyself over to a ² light woman.

27 ⁿ Honour thy father with thy whole heart, and forget not the sorrows of thy mother.

28 Remember that thou wast begotten of them; and how canst thou recompense them the things that they have done for thee?

29 Fear the Lord with all thy soul, and reverence his priests.

30 ^o Love him that made thee with all thy strength, and forsake not his ministers.

31 Fear the Lord, and honour the priest; and give him his portion, ^q as it is commanded thee; the firstfruits, and the trespass offering, and the gift of the shoulders, and the sacrifice of sanctification, and the firstfruits of the holy things.

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¹ Deut. 25. 4.
Prov. 27. 23.
&c.

^m Prov. 22. 6.
Eph. 6. 4.

² Or, *hateful*.

ⁿ Tobit 4. 3.
ch. 3. 2, &c.

^o Deut. 6. 5.

^p Deut. 12. 19.

^q Lev. 2. 3, 10.
& 6. 16. & 7.
7. 9, 34.
Num. 5. 9.
& 18. 8,—19.

21. "A good servant." Rather, "intelligent," sensible.

"Defraud him not," &c. The Law appointed that every servant should be allowed to "go out free" in the seventh, or Sabbatical year. See Exod. xxi. 2. Deut. xv. 12.

24. "Shew not thyself cheerful," &c. There is no text of Canonical Scripture in which "cheerfulness" is used otherwise than in a good sense; and this precept exhibits perhaps somewhat of the undue strictness and severity with which females, especially in their youth, were anciently, and still are, treated in Eastern countries.

26. "Give not thyself over to a light woman." This clause is not in some MSS. The meaning seems to be, "But if she is undeserving of thy affection, do not put thyself in her power." See *Margin*. Dr. Scrivener, *Introd.*, p. xxix., remarks: "There is no trace" (i.e. in MSS.) "of 'light,' except it be a euphemistic paraphrase."

31. "The sacrifice of sanctification," called "*mincha*," was of things without life, as flour, cakes, &c.; and was so called, as being the most holy of the offerings made by fire to the Lord. See the first of the references in the *Margin*.

ECCLESIASTICUS, VIII.

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^r Deut. 15. 8,
10.
² Or, *thy*
liberality.
³ Rom. 12. 15.

¹ Matt. 25.
36, 37, 43.

32 ^r And stretch thine hand unto the poor, that
² thy blessing may be perfected.

33 A gift hath grace in the sight of every man
living; and for the dead detain it not.

34 ^a Fail not to be with them that weep, and mourn
with them that mourn.

35 ^t Be not slow to visit the sick: for that shall
make thee to be beloved.

36 Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the
end, and thou shalt never do amiss.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *Whom we may not strive with, 8 nor despise, 10 nor provoke, 15 nor have to do with.*

STRIVE not with a mighty man, lest thou fall
into his hands.

^a Matt. 5. 25.
^b ch. 31. 6.

2 ^a Be not at variance with a rich man, lest he
overweigh thee: for gold ^b hath destroyed many,
and perverted the hearts of kings.

³ Or, *of an*
evil tongue.

3 Strive not with a man that is ³ full of tongue,
and heap not wood upon his fire.

33. "A gift hath grace in the sight of," &c. This translation follows the LXX. and the Vulgate; but the meaning seems rather to be, Beneficence is grateful (and ought to be shown, not only to the poor, &c., but) to every man "living."

"And for the dead," &c. The sense is obscured by the ambiguity of the translation. Having spoken of provision and maintenance for the priest, and kind actions to be done to the "living" (and especially to the poor), the writer extends his concern to the "dead." In funeral rites, and other tokens of respect, let all due kindness be shown to them also. See Tobit iv. 17. Jer. xvi. 7.

36. "Whatsoever thou takest in hand." So the Vulgate; but the LXX., "In all thy words."

"Remember the end." Rather, "thy latter end," as in the LXX. and Vulgate.

CHAPTER VIII.

To the positive precepts contained in the former chapter the writer now adds several negative ones, i.e. in reference to what the disciple of wisdom ought *not* to do.

2. "Lest he overweigh thee." By using his riches to thy disadvantage; which may easily happen: for too many have been corrupted by bribery, and even kings have been unable to withstand its influence in the exercise of their power.

3. "Heap not wood," &c. Do not by opposition or rejoinder give him occasion to multiply words, lest you provoke him further; as a fire is made to burn more fiercely if more fuel is thrown upon it.

ECCLESIASTICUS, VIII.

4 Jest not with a rude man, lest thy ancestors be disgraced. Before
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5 ^c Reproach not a man that turneth from sin, but remember that we are all worthy of punishment. ^c 2 Cor. 2. 6.
Gal. 6. 2.

6 ^d Dishonour not a man in his old age: for even some of us wax old. ^d Lev. 19. 32.

7 Rejoice not over thy greatest enemy being dead, but remember that we die all.

8 Despise not the discourse of the wise, but acquaint thyself with their proverbs: for of them thou shalt learn instruction, and how to serve great men with ease.

9 ^e Miss not the discourse of the elders: for they also learned of their fathers, and of them thou shalt learn understanding, and to give answer as need requireth. ^e ch. 6. 34.

10 Kindle not the coals of a sinner, lest thou be burnt with the flame of his fire.

11 Rise not up [in anger] at the presence of an injurious person, lest he lie in wait ² to entrap thee in thy words. ² Or, *for thy mouth.*

12 Lend not unto him that is mightier than thyself; for if thou lendest him, count it but lost.

13 Be not surety above thy power: for if thou be surety, take care to pay it.

14 Go not to law with a judge; for they will judge for him according to his ³ honour. ³ Or, *opinion.*

15 ^f Travel not by the way with a bold fellow, lest he become grievous unto thee: for he will do according to his own will, and thou shalt perish with him through his folly. ^f Gen. 4. 8.

4. "Lest thy ancestors;" i.e. lest he be not content with abusing thyself, but reproach thine ancestors also.

5. "Reproach not a man," &c. See the references in the *Margin*.

7. "Rejoice not over thy greatest enemy being dead." Rather, according to the LXX., "Rejoice not over the dead." And so some commentators, though the Vulgate adds, "thine enemy."

10. "Kindle not," &c ; i.e. do not irritate and provoke a wicked man.

11. "To entrap thee." The mark of reference is more properly placed after "thee," instead of before "to."

13. "For if thou be surety," &c. For, in any case, having become surety, thou must not attempt to escape the obligation.

14. "For they," &c. That is, the other judges who are to try the cause. The Vulgate gives quite a different meaning.

15. "And thou shalt perish with him," &c. His "folly" may lead

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f Prov. 22. 24.

16 ^e Strive not with an angry man, and go not with him into a solitary place: for blood is as nothing in his sight; and where there is no help, he will overthrow thee.

17 Consult not with a fool; for he cannot keep counsel.

18 Do no secret thing before a stranger; for thou knowest not what he will bring forth.

19 Open not thine heart to every man, lest he requite thee with a shrewd turn.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *We are advised how to use our wives. 3 What women to avoid. 10 And not to change an old friend. 13 Not to be familiar with men in authority, 14 but to know our neighbours, 15 and to converse with wise men.*

BE not jealous over the wife of thy bosom, and teach her not an evil lesson against thyself.

2 Give not thy soul unto a woman to set her foot upon thy substance.

a Prov. 7. 5,
&c.

3 ^a Meet not with an harlot, lest thou fall into her snares.

c Or, playeth
upon instru-
ments.

4 Use not much the company of a woman that ² is a singer, lest thou be taken with her attempts.

b Job 31. 1.

5 ^b Gaze not on a maid, that thou fall not by those things that are precious in her.

6 Give not thy soul unto harlots, that thou lose not thine inheritance.

7 Look not round about thee in the streets of the city, neither wander thou in the solitary places thereof.

c Gen. 34. 2.
2 Sam. 11. 2.
Judith 10.
19. & 12. 16.
Matt. 5. 28.

8 ^c Turn away thine eye from a beautiful woman, and look not upon another's beauty; for many have

thee into quarrels with other travellers, or with persons whom you may meet; and so may bring destruction upon you both.

19. The translation here is not strictly grammatical, though the sense is obvious. "Lest he," &c.; i.e. lest, if thou do so to *all*, without sufficient caution, thou mayst meet with *some one* who will abuse thy confidence, and do thee an injury.

CHAPTER IX.

2. There is much variety in the interpretation of this verse. Compare Prov. xxxi. 3. St. Luke xv. 30.

4. "Her attempts." Rather, "her accomplishments," or musical skill.

5. "That thou fall not," &c. The interpretation of this clause is very uncertain.

ECCLESIASTICUS, IX.

been deceived by the beauty of a woman ; for herewith love is kindled as a fire.

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9 Sit not at all with another man's wife, nor sit down with her in thine arms, and spend not thy money with her at the wine ; lest thine heart incline unto her, and so through thy desire thou fall into destruction.

10 Forsake not an old friend ; for the new is not comparable to him : a new friend is as new wine ; when it is old, thou shalt drink it with pleasure.

11 ^d Envy not the glory of a sinner : for thou knowest not what shall be his end.

^d Ps. 37. 1,
&c. & 73.
3, 17.

12 Delight not in the thing that the ungodly have pleasure in ; but remember they shall not go unpunished unto their grave.

13 Keep thee far from the man that hath power to kill ; so shalt thou not doubt the fear of death : and if thou come unto him, make no fault, lest he take away thy life presently : remember that thou goest in the midst of snares, and that thou walkest upon the battlements of the city.

14 As near as thou canst, guess at thy neighbour, and consult with the wise.

15 Let thy talk be with the wise, ^e and all thy ^e communication in the law of the most High.

^e Ps. 1. 2.

16 And let just men eat and drink with thee ; and let thy glorying be in the fear of the Lord.

9. "Nor sit down with her," &c. This clause is probably an interpolation. It is not in the LXX.

11. "His end." Rather, "his overthrow," catastrophe.

12. "They shall not go unpunished," &c. Punishment shall overtake them before they die. It has been doubted whether the doctrine of a future state is to be found in this book. It appears to be asserted in i. 13 ; xi. 26 ; xli. 9 ; xlviii. 11 ; but is obscured, if not denied, in xvii. 27, 28 ; xli. 4 ; xliv. 14, 15. See *Introduction*.

13. "Keep thee far from the man," &c. Avoid the court of princes, especially of tyrants. "So shalt thou not doubt," &c. ; i.e. so shalt thou be free from the suspicion of deadly violence. But the translation is awkward, and scarcely clear.

"Make no fault," &c. Be careful how you behave ; avoid all impropriety in your demeanour.

"Upon the battlements," &c. ; i.e. upon a giddy, dangerous eminence.

15. "In the law," &c. So as to be in accordance with its tenour, and to come within its requirements, if not actually engaged upon it. See the reference in *Margin*.

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17 For the hand of the artificer the work shall be commended: and the wise ruler of the people for his speech.

18 A man of an ill tongue is dangerous in his city; and he that is rash in his talk shall be hated.

CHAPTER X.

1 *The commodities of a wise ruler. 4 God setteth him up. 7 The inconveniencies of pride, injustice, and covetousness. 14 What God hath done to the proud. 19 Who shall be honoured, 29 and who not.*

A WISE judge will instruct his people; and the government of a prudent man is well ordered.

^a Prov. 29. 12.

2 ^aAs the judge of the people is himself, so are his officers; and what manner of man the ruler of the city is, such are all they that dwell therein.

3 An unwise king destroyeth his people; but through the prudence of them which are in authority the city shall be inhabited.

4 The power of the earth is in the hand of the Lord, and in due time he will set over it one that is profitable.

5 In the hand of God is the prosperity of man: and upon the ²person of the scribe shall he lay his honour.

² Or, face.

^b Lev. 19. 17.
Matt. 18. 21.

6 ^bBear not hatred to thy neighbour for every wrong; and do nothing at all by injurious practices.

7 Pride is hateful before God and man: and by both doth one commit iniquity.

8 Because of unrighteous dealings, injuries, and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is translated from one people to another.

CHAPTER X.

2. "And what manner of man," &c. Cicero, a competent judge, has made the same observation: "Licet videre qualescunque summi civitatis viri fuerint, talem civitatem fuisse" (*De Leg.*, lib. iii., c. 14.).

3. "Shall be inhabited." Rather, "built up," and become prosperous.

5. "Upon the person of the scribe," &c. By "the scribe" here seems to be meant, any one who is in office or authority, especially as a guide or instructor of others.

"His honour;" i.e. the honour due to him, the scribe.

6. "For every wrong." Rather, "for any." For no wrong bear hatred. See vii. 13, in Greek. And the references in the *Margin* require this interpretation.

7. "And by both," &c. The text is here so doubtful, that the true meaning must be left undetermined. Some translate, "and towards both" (God and man) "it commits wrong."

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9 Why is earth and ashes proud? There is not a more wicked thing than a covetous man: for such an one setteth his own soul to sale; because while he liveth he casteth away his bowels.

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10 The physician cutteth off a long disease; and he that is to day a king to morrow shall die.

11 For when a man is dead, he shall inherit ^c creeping things, beasts, and worms. c Is. 14. 11.

12 The beginning of pride is when one departeth from God, and his heart is turned away from his Maker.

13 For pride is the beginning of sin, and he that hath it shall pour out abomination: and therefore the Lord brought upon them strange calamities, and overthrew them utterly.

14 ^d The Lord hath cast down the thrones of proud princes, and set up the meek in their stead. d 1 Sam. 2. 8.
Luke 1. 52.

15 The Lord hath plucked up the roots of the proud nations, and planted the lowly in their place.

16 The Lord overthrew countries of the heathen, and destroyed them to the foundations of the earth.

17 He took some of them away, and destroyed them, and hath made their memorial to cease from the earth.

18 Pride was not made for men, nor furious anger for them that are born of a woman.

19 They that fear the Lord are a sure seed, and they that love him an honourable plant: they that regard not the law are a dishonourable seed; they

9. The genuine text of this verse is very uncertain. Some, following the LXX., omit the second and third clauses, and give an entirely different sense to the fourth.

10. If this interpretation is to be accepted,—for the text is again uncertain,—the meaning appears to be: As the skill of a physician sometimes cures a long-standing disease, so God, by the stroke of death, removes a proud king who has long persisted in abusing his power, and so gives relief to the body of the state. Some reject the verse as spurious.

13. "For pride is the beginning," &c. Rather, as in the LXX., "the beginning of pride is sin."

"Brought upon them," &c.; i.e. upon such as *have* pride; but the reading is doubtful.

16. "To the foundations of the earth;" i.e. utterly.

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that transgress the commandments are a ²deceivable seed.

² Or, *unstable generation.*

20 Among brethren he that is chief is honourable ; so are they that fear the Lord in his eyes.

³ Or, *principality.*

21 The fear of the Lord goeth before ³the obtaining of authority : but roughness and pride is the losing thereof.

22 Whether he be rich, noble, or poor, their glory is the fear of the Lord.

23 It is not meet to despise the poor man that hath understanding ; neither is it convenient to magnify a sinful man.

24 Great men, and judges, and potentates, shall be honoured ; yet is there none of them greater than he that feareth the Lord.

^e Prov. 17. 2.

25 ^eUnto the servant that is wise shall they that are free do service : and he that hath knowledge ^fwill not grudge when he is reformed.

^f 2 Sam. 12. 13.
Prov. 15. 5.

26 Be not overwise in doing thy business ; and boast not thyself in the time of thy distress.

^g Prov. 12. 9.

27 ^gBetter is he that laboureth, and aboundeth in all things, than he that boasteth himself, and wanteth bread.

28 My son, glorify thy soul in meekness, and give it honour according to the dignity thereof.

29 Who will justify him that sinneth against his own soul ? and who will honour him that dishonoureth his own life ?

30 The poor man is honoured for his skill, and the rich man is honoured for his riches.

21. "Goeth before," &c. Is a fit preparation for "the obtaining of authority;" for all authority is from God, and no one can exercise it well without the fear of Him. The mark of reference should be transferred to its proper place, before "authority." Some, following the LXX. and Vulgate, omit the verse.

22. "Whether he," &c. Rather, "Whether one . . . his glory is," &c.

26. "Be not overwise," &c.; i.e. do not lay claim to superior wisdom,—which is a mark of pride,—*"in doing thy business;"* and *"in the time of thy distress,"* more especially, do not, through conceit, hold thyself above the labour and pains which are necessary to remove it.

27. Some, following the Vatican copy, omit the words, *"and aboundeth."*

ECCLESIASTICUS, XI.

31 He that is honoured in poverty, how much more in riches? and he that is dishonourable in riches, how much more in poverty?

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CHAPTER XI.

⁴ We may not vaunt or set forth ourselves, ⁸ nor answer rashly, ¹⁰ nor meddle with many matters. ¹⁴ Wealth and all things else are from God.

²⁴ Brag not of thy wealth, ²⁹ nor bring every man into thy house.

WISDOM lifteth up the head ² of him that is of ² Or, of the low degree, and ^a maketh him to sit among ^{lowly.} great men. ^a Gen. 41. 40. Dan. 6. 3.

² Commend not a man for his beauty; neither abhor a man for his outward appearance.

³ The bee is little among such as fly; but her fruit is the chief of sweet things.

⁴ ^b Boast not of thy clothing and raiment, and ^b Acts 12. 21. exalt not thyself in the day of honour: for ^c the ^c Ps. 139. 14. works of the Lord are wonderful, and his works among men are hidden.

⁵ Many ³ kings have sat down upon the ground; ³ Gr. tyrants. and one that was never thought of hath worn the crown.

⁶ ^d Many mighty men have been greatly disgraced; ^d 1 Sam. 15. 28. and the honourable delivered into other men's hands. ^{Esth. 7. 10.}

⁷ ^e Blame not before thou hast examined the truth: ^e Deut. 13. 14. understand first, and then rebuke. ^{& 17. 6, 7.}

⁸ ^f Answer not before thou hast heard the cause: ^f Prov. 18. 13. neither interrupt men in the midst of their talk.

⁹ Strive not in a matter that concerneth thee not; and ^g sit not ⁴ in judgment with sinners.

¹⁰ My son, meddle not with many matters: for if ^g Ps. 1. 1. ⁴ Or, in the judgment of sinners.

CHAPTER XI.

4. "In the day of honour;" i.e. when honour befalls thee; for all such distinction cometh of God, who works wonderful revolutions among men, which they cannot foresee, especially for the abasement and overthrow of the proud. See the two following verses; and to the references in the *Margin* add the examples of Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 30; and of Herod, Acts xii. 23.

9. "And sit not in judgment," &c. Do not associate with sinners, especially in the administration of justice, lest thou become a partaker of their sins.

10. To "meddle" generally implies interference in matters with which we have no proper concern. Here the caution appears to be against attempting more than we can well manage, which often leads

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² Or, *escape*
hurt.

^h Prov. 10. 3.
Matt. 19. 22.
¹ Tim. 6. 9.

¹ Job 42. 10.

^k 1 Sam. 2. 7.
Job 1. 21.
Ezek. 28. 4,
&c.

¹ Luke 12. 19.

³ Or, *pass*.

^m Ps. 49. 10.
ch. 14. 4.

ⁿ Matt. 10. 22.

thou meddle much, thou shalt not be innocent; and if thou follow after, thou shalt not obtain, neither shalt thou ² escape by fleeing.

11 ^h There is one that laboureth, and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind.

12 Again, there is another that is slow, and hath need of help, wanting ability, and full of poverty; ⁱ yet the eye of the Lord looked upon him for good, and set him up from his low estate,

13 and lifted up his head from misery; so that many that saw it marvelled at him.

14 ^k Prosperity and adversity, life and death, poverty and riches, come of the Lord.

15 Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the law, are of the Lord: love, and the way of good works, are from him.

16 Error and darkness had their beginning together with sinners: and evil shall wax old with them that glory therein.

17 The gift of the Lord remaineth with the godly, and his favour bringeth prosperity for ever.

18 There is that waxeth rich by his wariness and pinching, and this is the portion of his reward:

19 whereas he saith, ¹ I have found rest, and now will eat continually of my goods; and *yet* he knoweth not what time shall ³ come upon him, and that ^m he must leave those things to others, and die.

20 ⁿ Be stedfast in thy covenant, and be conversant therein, and wax old in thy work.

to evil consequences, both to ourselves and to others. The text of the last clause is uncertain.

11. To the references in the *Margin* add, Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2. Prov. x. 22. The sense runs on to the end of ver. 15. There can be no true success without the Divine blessing; and with it we can never fail. See vv. 17, 21, 22.

15. Some, following the LXX., omit this verse and the following.

16. The darkening of the understanding arises from the commission of sin, whereas obedience gives wisdom. See above, i. 26; and Prov. xxviii. 5. Dan. xii. 10. To glory in evil excludes the hope of repentance, and the sinner who so glories "waxes old" in and with his sins.

18. "And this is the portion," &c.; i.e. he has no other, nothing better than "pinching," and constant anxiety; or, rather, the sum of the "reward" may be regarded as expressed in the following verse.

20. "Be stedfast in thy covenant;" i.e. in the covenant God has

ECCLESIASTICUS, XI.

21 Marvel not at the works of sinners; but trust in the Lord, and abide in thy labour: for it is an easy thing in the sight of the Lord on the sudden to make a poor man rich.

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22 The blessing of the Lord is ²in the reward of the godly, and suddenly he maketh his blessing to flourish. ^{2 Or, for a reward.}

23 Say not, ° What profit is there in my service? ° Mal. 3. 14. and what good things shall I have?

24 Again, say not, I have enough, and possess many things, and what evil can come to me hereafter?

25 In the day of prosperity there is a forgetfulness of affliction: and in the day of affliction there is no more remembrance of prosperity.

26 For it is an easy thing unto the Lord in the day of death to reward a man according to his ways.

27 The affliction of an hour maketh a man forget pleasure: and in his end his deeds shall be discovered.

28 Judge none blessed before his death: for a man shall be known in his children.

29 Bring not every man into thine house: for the deceitful man hath many trains.

made with thy fathers and with thee; and then be assured of His blessing. See ver. 22; xliiv. 11.

21. "At the works of sinners;" i.e. at their apparent success. See Ps. xxxvii. 1, 7. Prov. xxiii. 17.

23. "In my service;" i.e. in my service and obedience to God. See St. Matt. xix. 27. But it may be doubted whether the words belong to the text. They are not in the LXX.

27. "And in his end his deeds," &c. They shall be "discovered," more or less, to others, by the way in which he meets death; but, most of all, to himself, because he will then form a just estimate of his own past life.

28. This sentiment, as derived from Solon, occurs frequently in ancient authors; and, though generally based upon the uncertain tenure of human happiness in this life, it has sometimes been connected, as here (if we read "for," but LXX. has "and"), with the good or evil which may befall a man's children, and which he may live to see. Comp. Juvenal, *Sat.* X. 240 sqq. "A man shall be known," &c.; i.e. as regards his happiness or the contrary; or (if we read "and" instead of "for") the care or neglect of his children brings to light the parent's character.

29. "Hath many trains;" i.e. artifices.

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30 Like as a partridge taken [and kept] in a cage, so is the heart of the proud; and like as a spy, watcheth he for thy fall:

31 for he lieth in wait, and turneth good into evil, and in things worthy praise will lay blame upon thee.

32 Of a spark of fire a heap of coals is kindled: and a sinful man layeth wait for blood.

33 Take heed of a mischievous man, for he worketh wickedness; lest he bring upon thee a perpetual blot.

34 Receive a stranger into thine house, and he will disturb thee, and turn thee out of thine own.

CHAPTER XII.

² *Be not liberal to the ungodly. 10 Trust not thine enemy, nor the wicked.*

^a Matt. 7. 6.

WHEN thou wilt do good, ^a know to whom thou doest it; so shalt thou be thanked for thy benefits.

2 Do good to the godly man, and thou shalt find a recompence; and if not from him, yet from the most High.

3 There can no good come to him that is always occupied in evil, nor to him that giveth no alms.

4 Give to the godly man, and help not a sinner.

5 Do well unto him that is lowly, but give not to the ungodly: hold back thy bread, and give it

30. A tame partridge has been formerly used to decoy other birds of the like kind into the nets spread for them. "The proud" appears to be the same as "the deceitful" in the foregoing verse, and "the sinful" and "mischievous" in vv. 32, 33. Grotius suggests a change of reading. But compare xiii. 1.

34. "Thine own." The Greek is in the plural, and may be taken for either persons or things.

CHAPTER XII.

1. This precept is closely connected with the last verse of the foregoing chapter. "So shalt thou be thanked, &c." Thou shalt escape the disappointment incident to those who bestow benefits on the ungrateful.

3. From the general caution, not to practise beneficence towards unworthy objects, the writer proceeds to the duty of almsgiving, which also requires much discrimination for its proper exercise. By mistaken charity we may encourage idleness and improvidence, and disable ourselves from giving relief to those who deserve it most. The precepts which follow are to be interpreted with reference to these general principles.

not unto him, lest he overmaster thee thereby: for [else] thou shalt receive twice as much evil for all the good thou shalt have done unto him.

Before
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6 For the most High hateth sinners, and will repay vengeance unto the ungodly, and keepeth them against the mighty day of their punishment.

7 Give unto the good, and help not the sinner.

8 A friend cannot be known in prosperity: and an enemy cannot be hidden in adversity.

9 In the prosperity of a man enemies will be grieved: but in his adversity even a friend will depart.

10 Never trust thine enemy: for like as ²iron ²Or, brass. rusteth, so is his wickedness.

11 Though he humble himself, and go crouching, yet take good heed and beware of him, and thou shalt be unto him as if thou hadst wiped a looking-glass, and thou shalt know that his rust hath not been altogether wiped away.

12 Set him not by thee, lest, when he hath overthrown thee, he stand up in thy place; neither let him sit at thy right hand, lest he seek to take thy seat, and thou at the last remember my words, and be pricked therewith.

13 Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a serpent, or any such as come nigh wild beasts?

14 So one that goeth to a sinner, and is ³defiled ³Or, mingled. with him in his sins, who will pity?

5. "Lest he overmaster thee thereby." Lest he abuse thy kindness, and misapply thy bounty to thine own prejudice.

"For [else]." Dr. Scrivener has pointed out (*Introd.*, p. xxxvii.) that the word "else" should have been printed in Italics rather than bracketed.

6. "For the most High hateth sinners," &c. Therefore we ought not to befriend or encourage them by mistaken kindness. See 2 Pet. ii. 9; and compare St. Matt. v. 45. St. Luke vi. 35, for the necessary qualification, under the Gospel, of these sentiments.

"And keepeth them," &c. This clause is not in the LXX.

10. "Like as iron rusteth." As brass (see *Margin*), however it may be rubbed and cleaned, does not cease after a time again to contract rust, so an enemy, though seemingly reconciled, will sooner or later return to his old rancour.

11. "A lookingglass." The mirrors used in ancient times were made of metal, generally of brass. See Exod. xxxviii. 8.

13. "Who will pity a charmer;" i.e. one who pretends to charm serpents. See Ps. lviii. 4, 5. Jer. viii. 17.

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15 For a while he will abide with thee, but if thou begin to fall, he will not tarry.

^b Jer. 41. 6.

16 An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips, but in his heart he imagineth how to throw thee into a pit: he will ^bweep with his eyes, but if he find opportunity, he will not be satisfied with blood.

² Or,
supplant.

17 If adversity come upon thee, thou shalt find him there first; and though he pretend to help thee, yet shall he ²undermine thee.

18 He will shake his head, and clap his hands, and whisper much, and change his countenance.

CHAPTER XIII.

¹ Keep not company with the proud, or a mightier than thyself. ¹⁵ Like will to like. ²¹ The difference between the rich and the poor. ²⁵ A man's heart will change his countenance.

^a Deut. 7. 2.

HE that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith; and ^ahe that hath fellowship with a proud man shall be like unto him.

³ Gr. *this shall smite against it, and be broken.*

2 Burden not thyself above thy power while thou livest; and have no fellowship with one that is mightier and richer than thyself: for how agree the kettle and the earthen pot together? ³ for if the one be smitten against the other, it shall be broken.

3 The rich man hath done wrong, and yet he threateneth withal: the poor is wronged, and he must intreat also.

4 If thou be for his profit, he will use thee: but if thou have nothing, he will forsake thee.

5 If thou have any thing, he will live with thee: yea, he will make thee bare, and will not be sorry for it.

6 If he have need of thee, he will deceive thee, and smile upon thee, and put thee in hope; he will speak thee fair, and say, What wantest thou?

7 And he will shame thee by his meats, until

16. See Prov. xxvi. 24, 25.

17. "Thou shalt find him there first;" eager to be a witness of thy disgrace, and to insult thee in thy calamity.

CHAPTER XIII.

2. "How agree the kettle," &c. The same comparison is used in one of *Æsop's Fables*, as a warning against unequal associations.

6. "What wantest thou?" As if he meant to assist thee.

7. "He will shame thee by his meats." The meaning seems to be,

ECCLESIASTICUS, XIII.

he have drawn thee dry twice or thrice, and at the last he will laugh thee to scorn: afterward, when he seeth thee, he will forsake thee, and shake his head at thee.

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8 Beware that thou be not deceived, and brought down ²in thy jollity.

² Or, by thy
simplicity.

9 If thou be invited of a mighty man, withdraw thyself, and so much the more will he invite thee.

10 Press thou not upon him, lest thou be put back; stand not far off, lest thou be forgotten.

11 ³ Affect not to be made equal unto him in talk, ⁴ and believe not his many words: for with much communication will he tempt thee, and smiling upon thee will get out thy secrets:

³ Or, For-
bear not.
⁴ Or, but.

12 but cruelly he will lay up thy words, and will not spare to do thee hurt, and to put thee in prison.

13 Observe, and take good heed, for thou walkest in peril of thy overthrowing: when thou hearest these things, awake in thy sleep.

14 Love the Lord all thy life, and call upon him for thy salvation.

15 Every beast loveth his like, and every man loveth his neighbour.

16 All flesh consorteth according to kind, and a man will cleave to his like.

17 ^b What fellowship hath the wolf with the lamb? ^b 2 Cor. 6. 14. so the sinner with the godly.

18 What agreement is there between the hyena and a dog? and what peace between the rich and the poor?

19 As the wild ass is the lion's prey in the wilderness: so ^c the rich eat up the poor.

c James 2. 6

By provoking thee to return his luxurious entertainments, which are beyond thy means, he will bring thee into disgrace.

11. "Affect not," &c. The *Margin* gives the sense of a different Greek reading.

13. "When thou hearest these things." This admonition, which I now give thee, let it awaken thee out of the state of folly into which thou hast fallen, as into a deep sleep. But this clause is not in the LXX., which also omits altogether the next verse.

15. "His neighbour;" i.e. one who is truly such in nature and disposition. See the next verse.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XIV.

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20 As the proud hate humility : so doth the rich
abhor the poor.

21 A rich man beginning to fall is held up of
his friends : but a poor man being down is thrust
also away by his friends.

22 When a rich man is fallen, he hath many
helpers : he speaketh things not to be spoken, and
yet men justify him : the poor man slipped, and
yet they rebuked him too ; ^d he spake wisely, and
could have no place.

^d Eccles. 9.
15, 16.

^e Job 29. 9.

23 When a rich man speaketh, ^e every man hold-
eth his tongue, and, look, what he saith, they extol
it to the clouds : but if the poor man speak, they
say, What fellow is this ? and if he stumble, they
will help to overthrow him.

24 Riches are good unto him that hath no sin, and
poverty is evil in the mouth of the ungodly.

25 The heart of a man changeth his countenance,
^f Prov. 15. 13. whether it be for good or evil : and ^f a merry heart
maketh a cheerful countenance.

26 A cheerful countenance is a token of a heart
that is in prosperity ; and the finding out of para-
bles is a wearisome labour of the mind.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *A good conscience maketh men happy.* 5 *The niggard doeth good to none.* 13 *But do thou good.* 20 *Men are happy that draw near to wisdom.*

^a ch. 19. 16.
& 25. 8.

James 3. 2.

² Or, *sorrow.*

^b Rom. 14.

22.

1 John 3. 21.

BLESSED ^a is the man that hath not slipped with
his mouth, and is not pricked with the ² multi-
tude of sins.

2 ^b Blessed is he whose conscience hath not con-

24. "Riches are good"—not absolutely, but if innocently acquired, and spent charitably and thankfully ; "and poverty is evil"—not absolutely, but when it provokes men to discontent and complaints against the good providence of God ; when their "mouth" speaketh what it ought not.

25. "And a merry heart," &c. This clause is not in the LXX.

26. "And the finding out of parables," &c. See Eccles. xii. 12. This clause does not appear in the Vulgate.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. "With the multitude," &c. The *Margin* gives the sense of a different Greek reading.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XIV.

demned him, and who is not fallen from his hope in the Lord.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

3 Riches are not comely for a niggard : and what should an envious man do with money ?

4 He that gathereth by defrauding his own soul
gathereth for others, that shall spend his goods riotously. c ch. 11. 1.
ver. 15.

5 He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good ? he shall not take pleasure in his goods.

6 There is none worse than he that envieth himself ; and this is a recompence of his wickedness.

7 And if he doeth good, he doeth it unwillingly ; and at the last he will declare his wickedness.

8 The envious man hath a wicked eye ; he turneth away his face, and despiseth men.

9 A ^d covetous man's eye is not satisfied with his portion ; and the iniquity of the wicked drieth up his soul. d Prov. 27. 20.

10 ^e A wicked eye envieth [his] bread, and he is a niggard at his table. e Prov. 23.
6, 7.

11 My son, according to thy ability do good to thyself, and give the Lord his due offering.

12 Remember that death will not be long in coming, and that the covenant of the grave is not shewed unto thee.

13 ^f Do good unto thy friend before thou die, and according to thy ability stretch out thy hand and give to him. f Tobit 4. 7.
Luke 14. 13.

3. "Riches are not comely, &c.;" i.e. not becoming, because he does not know how to spend them.

"An envious man" here means one who grudges to himself all enjoyment of his wealth. See the three next verses.

6. "And this is a recompence," &c. The misery which a miser inflicts upon himself is his "proper punishment."

7. "And at the last," &c. The true character of the deed, and of his disposition in doing it, will become manifest.

8. "Hath a wicked eye." See below, xxxi. 13; xxxv. 10. Prov. xxii. 9; xxiii. 6. St. Mark vii. 22.

"Despiseth men." Pays no attention to their wants.

9. "The iniquity of the wicked," &c. Here, and throughout the greater portion of this chapter, from ver. 3 to ver. 20, the writer is intent on setting forth the folly and wickedness of a covetous disposition, and the duty and good effects, both to ourselves and others, of a cheerful open-handed enjoyment of the good things of this life.

12. "The covenant of the grave;" i.e. the appointed time of death.

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^g Eccles. 5.

¹, &c.
& 6. 1, &c.

² O; the
feast day.

^h ver. 4.

ⁱ Ps. 102. 26.

Is. 40. 6.

Heb. 1. 11.

James 1. 10.

¹ Pet. 1. 24.

^k Gen. 2. 17.

& 3. 19.

¹ Eccles. 1. 4.

^m Ps. 1. 2.

14 ^s Defraud not thyself of ² the good day, and let not the part of a good desire overpass thee.

15 ^h Shalt thou not leave thy travails unto another? and thy labours to be divided by lot?

16 Give, and take, and sanctify thy soul; for there is no seeking of dainties in the grave.

17 ⁱ All flesh waxeth old as a garment: for the covenant from the beginning is, ^k Thou shalt die the death.

18 As of the green leaves on a thick tree, some fall, and some grow; so is the generation of flesh and blood, ¹ one cometh to an end, and another is born.

19 Every work rotteth and consumeth away, and the worker thereof shall go withal.

20 ^m Blessed is the man that doth meditate good things in wisdom, and that reasoneth of holy things by his understanding.

21 He that considereth her ways in his heart shall also have understanding in her secrets.

22 Go after her as one that traceth, and lie in wait in her ways.

23 He that prieth in at her windows shall also hearken at her doors.

24 He that doth lodge near her house shall also fasten a ³ pin in her walls.

14. "Of a good desire," &c. The Vulgate has, "of a good gift;" i.e. from the providence of God.

15. "Thy travails;" i.e. the wealth thou hast gotten by travail.

16. "Sanctify thy soul." There is much doubt as to the true reading. The Vulgate has, "justify thy soul." The LXX., "beguile thy soul," probably in the sense of indulging it. The meaning may be,—In "giving" to others, or "taking" to thyself, do all to the glory of God. And remember withal that the time is short.

17. "Thou shalt die the death;" i.e. thou shalt surely die,—a Hebrew idiom which has passed into our common speech, but without sufficient regard to its original and proper signification. See references in *Margin*, and Exod. xxi. 17 compared with St. Matt. xv. 4. St. Mark vii. 10. For other instances of its improper use, see 2 Chr. xxxii. 24. Acts xxii. 4. Rev. xii. 11.

22. "As one that traceth;" i.e. with the keenness of a hunter in pursuit of his game.

24. "Shall also fasten a pin" (or "stake," see *Margin*) "in her walls." The metaphor is derived from the custom of fastening tents with pins. See Ezra ix. 8. Is. xxii. 23. But the rendering of our translation (different from that of the Vulgate) obscures the sense, which is brought out more clearly in the next verse.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XV.

25 He shall pitch his tent nigh unto her, and shall lodge in a lodging where good things are.

26 He shall set his children under her shelter, and shall lodge under her branches.

27 ⁿ By her he shall be covered from heat, and in ⁿ her glory shall he dwell. ⁿ Wisd. 10. 16.

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CHAPTER XV.

² *Wisdom embraceth those that fear God.* ⁷ *The wicked shall not get her.*
¹¹ *We may not charge God with our faults: 14 for he made, and left us to ourselves.*

HE that feareth the Lord will do good; and he that hath the knowledge of the law shall obtain her.

2 And as a mother shall she meet him, and receive him as a wife married of a virgin.

3 With the bread of understanding shall she feed him, and give him the water of wisdom to drink.

4 He shall be stayed upon her, and shall not be moved; and shall rely upon her, and shall not be confounded.

5 She shall exalt him above his neighbours, and in the midst of the congregation shall she open his mouth.

6 He shall find joy and a crown of gladness, and she shall cause him to inherit an everlasting name.

7 But foolish men shall not attain unto her, and sinners shall not see her.

8 For she is far from pride, and men that are liars cannot remember her.

9 ^{a 2} Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner, ^a Ps. 33. 1.
^{Prov.} 25. 7.
for ³ it was not sent him of the Lord.

10 For ⁴ praise shall be uttered in wisdom, and the Lord will prosper it. ² Or,
³ A parable.
³ Or,
^{he was not sent of, &c.}

11 ^b Say not thou, It is through the Lord that I fell away: for thou oughtest not to do the things that he hateth. ⁴ Or rather,
^{a parable.}
^b James 1. 13.

CHAPTER XV.

1. "Shall obtain her;" i.e. wisdom. The sense is carried on from the concluding verses of the last chapter.

9. In this and the next verse, for "Praise," the marginal reading, "parable," is to be preferred. A sinner may attempt to utter parables, or weighty sayings, but they are out of place in his mouth. The Lord did not inspire, and will not prosper such utterances. Compare xx. 20. Prov. xxvi. 7.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XVI.

Before
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12 Say not thou, He hath caused me to err: for he hath no need of the sinful man.

13 The Lord hateth all abomination; and they that fear God love it not.

^c Gen. 1. 26, 27.

14 He himself ^cmade man from the beginning,

^d Gen. 2. 16, 17.

^d and left him in the hand of his counsel;

^e Matt. 19. 17.

15 if thou wilt, to ^ekeep the commandments, and to perform acceptable faithfulness.

^f Deut. 30. 19.
Josh. 24. 15.

16 ^fHe hath set fire and water before thee: stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt.

^g Jer. 21. 8.

17 ^gBefore man is life and death; and whether him liketh shall be given him.

^h Ps. 147. 5.

18 ^hFor the wisdom of the Lord is great, and he is mighty in power, and beholdeth all things:

ⁱ Ps. 33. 18.
& 34. 15.
Heb. 4. 13.

19 and ⁱhis eyes are upon them that fear him, and he knoweth every work of man.

20 He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, neither hath he given any man licence to sin.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 It is better to have none, than many lewd children. 6 The wicked are not spared for their number. 12 Both the wrath and the mercy of the Lord are great. 17 The wicked cannot be hid. 20 God's works are unsearchable.

DESIRE not a multitude of unprofitable children, neither delight in ungodly sons.

2 Though they multiply, rejoice not in them, except the fear of the Lord be with them.

3 Trust not thou in their life, neither respect their multitude: for one that is just is better than a thousand; and better it is to die without children, than to have them that are ungodly.

4 For by one that hath understanding shall the city be replenished: but the ²kindred of the wicked shall speedily become desolate.

14. "And left him in the hand of his counsel;" i.e. gave him free will, and left him at liberty to "keep the commandments," &c. The construction runs on into the next verse. The change from the third to the second person in "If thou wilt" is sometimes found in general sentiments.

16. "Fire and water" may be understood to mean, whatever heats and inflames, and whatever cools and purifies the passions.

17. "Whether him liketh;" i.e. which of the two he chooses. See references in the *Margin* of the preceding verse.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XVI.

5 Many such things have I seen with mine eyes, and mine ear hath heard greater things than these. Before
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6 ^a In the congregation of the ungodly shall a fire be kindled; and in a rebellious nation wrath ² is set on fire. ^a ch. 21. 9.
² Or, *hath been*.

7 ^b He was not pacified toward the old giants, who fell away in the strength of their foolishness. ^b Gen. 6. 4.
Wisd. 14. 6.

8 ^c Neither spared he the place where Lot sojourned, but ^d abhorred them for their pride. ^c Gen. 19. 24.
^d Ezek. 16. 41, 50.

9 He pitied not the people of perdition, who were taken away in their sins:

10 ^e nor the six hundred thousand footmen, who were gathered together in the hardness of their hearts. ^e Num. 14. 15, 35. & 16. 21. & 21. 6. & 26. 64.

11 And if there be one stiffnecked among the people, it is marvel if he escape unpunished: for ^f mercy and wrath are with him; he is mighty to forgive, and to pour out displeasure. ^f ch. 5. 6.

12 As his mercy is great, so is his correction also: ^g he judgeth a man according to his works. ^g Ps. 62. 12.

13 The sinner shall not escape with his spoils: and the patience of the godly shall not be frustrate.

14 Make way for every work of mercy: for every man shall find according to his works.

15 ^h The Lord hardened Pharaoh, that he should not know him, that his powerful works might be known to the world. ^h Ex. 7. 3. & 14. 4, 8.
Rom. 9. 17, 18.

16 His mercy is manifest to every creature; and ⁱ he hath separated his light from the darkness with an ³ adamant. ⁱ Gen. 1. 4.
³ Or, *strong partition*.

17 Say not thou, I will hide myself from the Lord:

CHAPTER XVI.

7. "In the strength," &c.; i.e. in the excess of their pride and folly, which caused them to fall away from God.

9. "The people of perdition." The inhabitants of Sodom, and the other cities of the plain.

10. "Nor the six hundred thousand footmen," &c.; i.e. the Israelites who came forth out of Egypt. See Exod. xii. 37, and the references in *Margin*.

14. The text of the first clause of this verse is very doubtful.

15. See the *Notes* upon the passages referred to in the *Margin*. But this verse and the following are not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate. Both are omitted by some modern commentators.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XVI.

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shall any remember me from above? I shall not be remembered among so many people: for what is my soul among such an infinite number of creatures?

^k 1 Kin. 8, 27. ² Chr. 6, 18. ² Pet. 3, 7, 10. 18 ^k Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the deep, and the earth, and all that therein is, shall be moved when he shall visit.

19 The mountains also and foundations of the earth shall be shaken with trembling, when the Lord looketh upon them.

20 No heart can think upon these things worthily: ¹ Rom. 11, 33. ¹ and who is able to conceive his ways?

21 It is a tempest which no man can see: for the most part of his works are hid.

22 Who can declare the works of his justice? or who can endure them? for his covenant is afar off, and the trial of all things is in the end.

23 He that wanteth understanding will think upon vain things: and a foolish man erring imagineth follies.

24 My son, hearken unto me, and learn knowledge, and mark my words with thy heart.

25 I will shew forth doctrine in weight, and declare his knowledge exactly.

^m Ps. 111, 7, 8. 26 ^m The works of the Lord are done in judgment from the beginning: and from the time he made them he disposed the parts thereof.

² Or, *beginnings*. 27 He garnished his works for ever, and in his hand are the ² chief of them unto all generations: they neither labour, nor are weary, nor cease from their works.

ⁿ Ps. 148, 8. 28 None of them hindereth another, ⁿ and they shall never disobey his word.

29 After this the Lord looked upon the earth, and filled it with his blessings.

21. "It is a tempest," &c. See Ps. l. 3; xcvi. 2.

22. "His covenant is afar off;" i.e. the law by which He proceeds is far above our knowledge. See Is. lv. 9.

"And the trial of all things," &c. This clause is not in the LXX.

25. "Declare his knowledge;" i.e. declare what may be known of God, the knowledge of Him. Compare Is. liii. 11. 2 Pet. i. 3.

29. "After this," &c.; i.e. after He had created, and "garnished" them. See Gen. i. 31.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XVII.

30 ° With all manner of living things hath he covered the face thereof; ^p and they shall return into it again.

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° Gen. 1. 25.
P Eccles. 3. 20.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *How God created and furnished man.* 14 *Avoid all sin:* 19 *for God seeth all things.* 25 *Turn to him while thou livest.*

THE Lord ^a created man of the earth, and turned him into it again.

^a Gen. 1. 27.
& 3. 19.
& 5. 2.
Eccles. 3. 20.
Wisd. 2. 23.
& 7. 1, 6.
^b Job 14. 1.

2 ^b He gave them few days, and a short time, and power also over the things therein.

3 He endued them with strength by themselves, and ^c made them according to his image,

^c Gen. 1. 26.
& 9. 6.
1 Cor. 11. 7.
Colos. 3. 10.

4 and put the fear ² of man upon all flesh, ^d and gave him dominion over beasts and fowls.

² Or, of him.
^d Gen. 1. 28.

5 [They received the use of the five operations of the Lord, and in the sixth place he imparted them understanding, and in the seventh speech, an interpreter of the cogitations thereof.]

6 Counsel, and a tongue, and eyes, ears, and a heart, gave he them to understand.

7 Withal he filled them with the knowledge of understanding, and shewed them good and evil.

8 He set his eye upon their hearts, that he might shew them the greatness of his works.

9 He gave them to glory in his marvellous acts for ever, that they might declare his works with understanding.

10 And the elect shall praise his holy name.

CHAPTER XVII.

3. "He endued them with strength by themselves;" i.e. such as He gave to no other created beings.

5. "The five operations." See the next verse. But the text of this verse is very doubtful; it is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate, and some omit it. Dr. Scrivener prints the first clause in Italics, but the remainder of the verse, from "and in the sixth place," in ordinary type.

8. "He set his eye upon their hearts." This probably means, that He communicated to their hearts a share of His own intelligence, that they might magnify and adore Him in the contemplation of His works.

9. This verse and the following run thus, as one, in the LXX.: "He gave them to glory for ever in His marvellous acts, that men of understanding may declare His works."

ECCLESIASTICUS, XVII.

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11 Beside this he gave them knowledge, and the law of life for an heritage.

12 He made an everlasting covenant with them, and shewed them his judgments.

13 Their eyes saw the majesty of his glory, and their ears heard his glorious voice.

14 And he said unto them, Beware of all unrighteousness; and he ^e gave every man commandment concerning his neighbour.

^c Ex. 20, & 21, & 22, & 23.

^f ch. 15. 19. ver. 19.
Heb. 4. 13.

15 ^f Their ways are ever before him, and shall not be hid from his eyes.

16 Every man from his youth is given to evil; neither could they make to themselves fleshy hearts for stony.

^g Deut. 32. 8, 9.

^h Rom. 13. 1.

ⁱ Deut. 4. 20. & 10. 15.

^k Ex. 4. 22.

17 For ^g in the division of the nations of the whole earth he set a ^h ruler over every people; but ⁱ Israel is the Lord's portion:

18 whom, ^k being his firstborn, he nourisheth with discipline, and giving him the light of his love doth not forsake him.

^l ver. 15.

19 ^l Therefore all their works are as the sun before him, and his eyes are continually upon their ways.

20 None of their unrighteous deeds are hid from him, but all their sins are before the Lord.

21 But the Lord being gracious, and knowing his workmanship, ^m neither left nor forsook them, but spared them.

ⁿ ch. 29. 12, 13.

22 The ⁿ alms of a man is as a signet with him,

11. "The law of life;" i.e. a law which gives life to those who obey it.

16. "Fleshy hearts for stony." See Ezek. xxvi. 26. But this verse is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate. The same is to be observed of the first words of the next verse, and of the whole of ver. 18.

17. "But Israel is the Lord's portion;" i.e. has the Lord for their Ruler.

18. This verse is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

21. This verse is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

22. "The alms of a man," &c. A man's acts of charity are not overlooked by God, but remembered and laid up as things that are most valued, like the signet on a man's right hand, and the apple of his eye; and He will reward them by giving to his children the most precious of all gifts, repentance, which leadeth unto life. But the last clause is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

and he will keep the good deeds of man ° as the apple of the eye, and give repentance to his sons and daughters.

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° Ps. 17. 8.

23 ^p Afterwards he will rise up and reward them, and render their recompence upon their heads.

^p Matt. 25. 34, 35.

24 ^a But unto them that repent, he granted them a return, and comforted those that failed in patience.

^a Acts 3. 19.

25 ^r Return unto the Lord, and forsake thy sins, r make thy prayer before his face, and ² offend less.

^r Jer. 3. 12.

² Or,
lessen thy
offence.

26 Turn again to the most High, and turn away from iniquity: for he will lead thee out of darkness into the ³ light of health, and hate thou abomination vehemently.

³ Or, illumination.

27 ^s Who shall praise the most High in the grave, instead of them which live and give thanks?

^s Ps. 6. 5.
& 115. 17.
Is. 38. 18, 19.
Bar. 2. 17.

28 Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead, as from one that is not: the living and sound in heart shall praise the Lord.

29 How great is the lovingkindness of the Lord our God, and his compassion unto such as turn unto him in holiness!

30 For all things cannot be in men, because the son of man is not immortal.

31 ^t What is brighter than the sun? yet the light t thereof faileth: and flesh and blood will imagine evil.

^t Job 25. 5, 6.

32 He vieweth the power of the height of heaven; and all men are but earth and ashes.

24. This verse, if the text is correct, must be connected with ver. 20.

26. "For he will lead thee," &c. This clause is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

27. A caution against putting off repentance.

30. Men are compassed with follies and infirmities, and all have need of the Divine compassion. "Is not immortal;" i.e. is subject to death. This need not be understood to deny the immortality of the soul. See *Introduction*, and above, ix. 12.

32. "He vieweth," &c. This may either refer to the sun,—He, though so bright, and so exalted in his heavenly station, yet suffers eclipse; what wonder, then, that men, who are but dust and ashes, should be liable to imperfections! or it may refer to God,—He visiteth (see xvi. 18.) the highest powers of heaven, and discovers impurity even in them; and how much more must all men be vile in the sight of Him Whose perfections are infinite! See Job, as referred to in *Margin*.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XVIII.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

4 *God's works are to be wondered at. 9 Man's life is short. 11 God is merciful. 15 Do not blemish thy good deeds with ill words. 22 Defer not to be justified. 30 Follow not thy lusts.*

^a Gen. 1. 1.

HE that liveth for ever ^acreated all things in general.

^b Deut. 4. 35.

2 The Lord only is righteous, and ^bthere is none other but he,

^c ch. 42. 23.

3 who governeth the world with the palm of his hand, ^cand all things obey his will: for he

^d Lev. 10. 10.

is the King of all, by his power ^ddividing holy things among them from profane.

^e Ps. 106. 2.

4 To whom hath he given power to declare his works? ^eand who shall find out his noble acts?

5 Who shall number the strength of his majesty? and who shall also tell out his mercies?

6 As for the wondrous works of the Lord, there may nothing be taken from them, neither may any thing be put unto them, neither can the ground of them be found out.

7 When a man hath done, then he beginneth; and when he leaveth off, then he shall be doubtful.

8 What is man, and whereto serveth he? what is his good, and what is his evil?

^f Ps. 90. 10.

9 ^fThe number of a man's days at the most are an hundred years.

10 As a drop of water unto the sea, and a gravel-

CHAPTER XVIII.

2. "And there is none other but he." This clause is not in the LXX. The Vulgate gives a different sense.

3. "He is the King of all, by his power." The comma should be placed after these last words, rather than before them. But this verse is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

6. Compare xlii. 21.

7. "When a man hath done;" i.e. hath finished and done all he can in endeavouring to find out the ground of God's works, "then he beginneth." He is still, as it were, at the beginning; he has made no real progress; and when he has finished his enquiry, he is still perplexed, and lost in astonishment.

8. This verse has been interpreted in the sense of Ps. xvi. 2, "My goodness extendeth not to thee." See also Job xxii. 2, 3; xxxv. 6-8. But some understand it of good and ill fortune, happiness or misery. See vii. 1, *Note*.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XVIII.

stone in comparison of the sand ; so are a ^g thousand years to the days of eternity.

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11 Therefore is God patient with them, and poureth forth his mercy upon them.

^g Ps. 90. 4.
2 Pet. 3. 8.

12 He saw and perceived their end to be evil ; therefore he multiplied his compassion.

13 The mercy of man is toward his neighbour ;
^h but the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh : he reproveth, and nurtureth, and teacheth, and bringeth again, ⁱ as a shepherd his flock.

^h Ps. 145. 9.

ⁱ Jer. 31. 10.

14 He hath mercy on them that receive discipline, and that diligently seek after his judgments.

15 ^k My son, blemish not thy good deeds, neither use uncomfortable words when thou givest any thing.

^k ch. 41. 22.

16 Shall not the dew assuage the heat ? so is a word better than a gift.

17 Lo, is not a word better than a gift ? but both are with a gracious man.

18 A fool will upbraid churlishly, and a gift of the envious consumeth the eyes.

19 Learn before thou speak, and use physick or ever thou be sick.

20 Before judgment ^l examine thyself, and in the day of visitation thou shalt find mercy.

^l 1 Cor. 11.
28, 31.

11. "Therefore is God patient with them;" i.e. knowing how frail and fleeting their existence is in this world.

13. "The mercy of man is toward his neighbour;" i.e. toward one like himself, and from whom he may reasonably expect a like return; whereas the mercy of God is universal, and absolutely gratuitous.

16. See Deut. xxxii. 2. The meaning seems to be,—The heat is good and valuable, but the dew which assuages it is often better still. In like manner, a gift is good, but the kind word with which it is accompanied may be still better, because it takes away the irksome feeling of depression and obligation, which a gift ungraciously bestowed is apt to convey.

18. Compare xx. 13—15; xli. 22. "Will upbraid;" i.e. when he gives, he will reproach the receiver in a churlish manner. "And a gift of the envious,"—i.e. of one who gives grudgingly,—does not afford joy, or inspire cheerfulness, but rather "consumeth the eyes," makes the countenance sad. There is, perhaps, a reference to the supposed effects of the evil eye of an envious and uncharitable man.

20. "Before judgment," whether of man or God, take care to see how far thou hast done wrong, in order that thou mayest confess it,

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^m ch. 7. 17.

ⁿ Deut. 23. 21.
Eccles. 5. 4.

^o ch. 7. 17, 36.

^p Prov. 28. 14.

^q Rom. 6. 6.
& 13. 14.

21 ^m Humble thyself before thou be sick, and in the time of sins shew repentance.

22 ⁿ Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy vow in due time, and defer not until death to be justified.

23 Before thou prayest, prepare thyself; and be not as one that tempteth the Lord.

24 ^o Think upon the wrath that shall be at the end, and the time of vengeance, when he shall turn away his face.

25 When thou hast enough, remember the time of hunger: and when thou art rich, think upon poverty and need.

26 From the morning until the evening the time is changed, and all things are soon done before the Lord.

27 ^p A wise man will fear in every thing, and in the day of sinning he will beware of offence: but a fool will not observe time.

28 Every man of understanding knoweth wisdom, and will give praise unto him that found her.

29 They that were of understanding in sayings became also wise themselves, and poured forth exquisite parables.

30 ^q Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself from thine appetites.

and make satisfaction to the uttermost of thy power. If we would prevent sickness from becoming fatal to the body, we must have recourse to the necessary remedies in the first symptoms of the disease; and we must use the same precaution still more in the sicknesses of the soul. See vv. 19 and 21.

22. "To be justified;" i.e. to acquit thyself of thy vow. See references in the *Margin*.

24. "Turn away his face;" i.e. from thy prayer for mercy. A reason for the precept given in the foregoing verse.

26. In the short interval between morning and evening there is room for great vicissitude; and we can never be sure that we may not experience it.

27. "In the day of sinning;" i.e. when wickedness prevails, he will keep a stricter watch over himself, so as not to be led away by bad examples.

"But a fool," &c. This clause is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

29. They that have applied themselves to understand wise sayings, have become wise themselves, and delivered parables for the instruction of others.

30. In some MSS., "Temperance of Soul" is prefixed as a title to the section which begins here and ends after xix. 3.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XIX.

31 If thou givest thy soul the desires that please her, she will make thee a laughingstock to thine enemies that malign thee.

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32 Take not pleasure in much good cheer, neither be tied to the expence thereof.

33 Be not made a beggar by banqueting upon borrowing, when thou hast nothing in thy purse: for thou shalt lie in wait for thine own life, and be talked on.

CHAPTER XIX.

2 Wine and women seduce wise men. 7 Say not all thou hearest. 17 Reprove thy friend without anger. 22 There is no wisdom in wickedness.

A LABOURING man that is given to drunkenness shall not be rich: and he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.

2 ^a Wine and ^b women will make men of understanding to fall away: and he that cleaveth to harlots will become impudent. ^a Gen. 9. 21. & 19. 32, &c. ^b 1 Kin. 11. 1, 4.

3 Moths and worms shall have him to heritage, and a bold man shall be taken away.

4 ^c He that is hasty to give credit is lightminded; ^c Josh. 22. 11. ^d and he that sinneth shall offend against his own ^d Prov. 8. 36. soul.

5 Whoso taketh pleasure in wickedness shall be condemned: but he that resisteth pleasures crowneth his life.

6 He that can rule his tongue shall live without strife; and he that hateth babbling shall have less evil.

33. "For thou shalt lie in wait," &c. This clause is not in the LXX.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. "And he that contemneth small things," &c. This sentiment is equally true in matters of the least and greatest importance, and cannot be neglected with impunity if we would wish to escape failure either in our moral conduct, or in the management of public or private affairs. The LXX. has not the conjunction at the beginning of the clause; but some (though they also omit it) see a connection in the way in which a habit of drunkenness grows upon a man, and brings him to ruin, "by little and little."

3. "Moths and worms," &c. This may mean, "he shall come to the grave before his time." "And a bold man," &c.; i.e. bold in venturing upon such transgressions contrary to the express commands of God.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XIX.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

^e ch. 41. 23.

² Or, *of friend
or foe.*

³ Or, *show
his hatred.*

⁴ Or, *heart.*

^f Lev. 19. 17.
Matt. 18. 15.

⁵ Or, *Reprove.*

⁶ Or,
willingly.

^g ch. 14. 1.
& 25. 8.
James 3. 2.

⁷ Or, *Reprove.*

^h Prov. 1. 7.
ch. 40. 26.

⁸ Or, *of re-
ceiving him.*

7 ^e Rehearse not unto another that which is told unto thee, and thou shalt fare never the worse.

8 Whether it be ² to friend or foe, talk not of other men's lives; and if thou canst without offence, reveal them not.

9 For he heard and observed thee, and when time cometh he will ³ hate thee.

10 If thou hast heard a word, let it die with thee; and be bold, it will not burst thee.

11 A fool travaileth with a word, as a woman in labour of a child.

12 As an arrow that sticketh in a man's thigh, so is a word within a fool's ⁴ belly.

13 ^f Admonish a friend, it may be he hath not done it: and if he have done it, that he do it no more.

14 ⁵ Admonish thy friend, it may be he hath not said it: and if he have, that he speak it not again.

15 Admonish a friend: for many times it is a slander, and believe not every tale.

16 There is one that slippeth in his speech, but not ⁶ from his heart; and who is he that hath not offended with his ^g tongue?

17 ⁷ Admonish thy neighbour before thou threaten him; and not being angry, give place to the law of the most High.

18 ^h The fear of the Lord is the first step ⁸ to be accepted [of him,] and wisdom obtaineth his love.

19 The knowledge of the commandments of the

8. "Without offence;" i.e. without evil consequences to thyself or others, resulting from thy silence.

9. It often happens that what we say of others comes to their knowledge when we little expect it.

10. "Be bold, it will not burst thee." Make the necessary effort to suppress it, and be assured you will be no sufferer. See Job xxxii. 17—20.

12. "So is a word within a fool's belly." He has no ease or quiet till he makes known abroad what he has heard. The *Margin* gives the sense of a different Greek word.

17. "And not being angry, give place," &c. The words, "not being angry," are not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

"The law of the most High," here referred to, is, probably, Lev. xix. 17. See also Deut. xxi. 18, in regard to a stubborn and rebellious son; and compare Matt. xviii. 15—17. Gal. vi. 1.

18. This and the following verse are not in the LXX.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XIX.

Lord is the doctrine of life : and they that do things that please him shall ¹ receive the fruit of the tree of immortality.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

20 The fear of the Lord is all wisdom ; and in all wisdom is the performance of the law, and the knowledge of his omnipotency.

¹ Rev. 2. 7.
& 22. 2, 14.

21 ^k If a servant say to his master, I will not do ^k as it pleaseth thee ; though afterward he do it, he angereth him that nourisheth him.

^k Matt. 21. 20.

22 The knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom, neither at any time the counsel of sinners prudence.

23 There is a wickedness, and the same an abomination ; and there is a fool wanting in wisdom.

24 He that hath small understanding, and feareth God, is better than one that hath much wisdom, and transgresseth the law of the most High.

25 There is an exquisite subtilty, and the same is unjust ; and there is one that turneth aside to make judgment appear ; and there is a wise man that ² justifieth in judgment.

² Or, judgeth.

26 There is a wicked man that hangeth down his head ³ sadly ; but inwardly he is full of deceit,

³ Or, in black.

27 casting down his countenance, and making as if he heard not : where he is not known, he will do thee a mischief before thou be aware.

28 And if for want of power he be hindered from sinning, yet when he findeth opportunity he will do evil.

29 A man may be known by his look, and one that hath understanding by his countenance, when thou meetest him.

30 A man's attire, and ¹ excessive laughter, and ¹ gait, shew what he is.

¹ ch. 21. 20.

20. "The knowledge of his omnipotency." This clause is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

21. This verse appears to be out of place. It is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

23. It is not easy to discover the precise meaning of this verse, though it is probably intended to lead up to that which follows, and which contains a sentiment plain and valuable.

25. The text of this verse is very uncertain. The last clause is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

26. See Ps. x. 10.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XX.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

CHAPTER XX.

1 *Of silence and speaking.* 10 *Of gifts and gain.* 18 *Of slipping by the tongue.* 24 *Of lying.* 27 *Of divers advertisements.*

² Or,
seasonable.

THERE is a reproof that is not ²comely : again, some man holdeth his tongue, and he is wise.

2 It is much better to reprove, than to be angry secretly : ^aand he that confesseth his fault shall be preserved from hurt.

3 How good is it, when thou art reprov'd, to shew repentance ! for so shalt thou escape wilful sin.

^b ch. 30. 20. 4 As is the lust of ^ban eunuch to deflower a virgin ; so is he that executeth judgment with violence.

5 There is one that keepeth silence, and is found wise : and another by much babbling becometh hateful.

6 Some man holdeth his tongue, because he hath not to answer : and some keepeth silence, ^cknowing his time.

^d ch. 32. 4. 7 A wise man will hold his ^dtongue till he see opportunity : but a babbler and a fool will regard no time.

8 He that useth many words shall be abhorred ; and he that taketh to himself authority therein shall be hated.

9 There is a sinner that hath good success in evil things ; and there is a gain that turneth to loss.

10 There is a gift that shall not profit thee ; and there is a gift whose recompence is double.

11 There is an abasement because of glory ; and there is that lifteth up his head from a low estate.

CHAPTER XX.

3. This verse is not in the LXX.

8. "He that taketh to himself authority therein;" i.e. in conversation, so as to show contempt of others.

9. See Prov. i. 32.

10. "There is a gift that shall not profit thee." For instance, if it be given to an ungrateful man ; or, again, if it be given in an ungracious manner.

11. "There is an abasement because of glory," &c. That is, if we seek for the glory of an eminent position for which we are not qualified, we expose ourselves to humiliation and contempt.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XX.

12 There is that buyeth much for a little, and repayeth it sevenfold.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 201.

13 ^eA wise man by his words maketh himself beloved: but the ²graces of fools shall be ³poured out.

^e ch. 6. 5.

14 The gift of a fool shall do thee no good when thou hast it; neither yet of the envious for his necessity: ⁴for he looketh to receive many things for one.

² Or, *pleasant conceits.*

³ Or, *lost, or, spilt.*

⁴ Gr. *for his eyes are many for one to receive.*
^f ch. 41. 22.

15 He giveth little, and ^fupbraideth much; he openeth his mouth like a crier; to day he lendeth, and to morrow will he ask it again: such an one is to be hated of God and man.

16 The fool saith, I have no friends, I have no thank for all my good deeds, and they that eat my bread speak evil of me.

17 How oft, and of how many shall he be laughed to scorn! for he knoweth not aright what it is to have; and it is all one unto him as if he had it not.

18 To slip upon a pavement is better than to slip with the tongue: so the fall of the wicked shall come speedily.

19 ⁵An unseasonable tale will always be in the mouth of the unwise.

⁵ Or, *An unpleasant fellow.*

20 A wise sentence shall be rejected when it cometh out of a fool's mouth; for he will not speak it in due season.

21 There is that is hindered from sinning through want: and when he taketh rest, he ⁶shall not be troubled.

⁶ Gr. *shall not be pricked.*

12. A cheap bargain, instead of being any real gain, often proves a great loss, costing in the end seven times more than it was worth.

13. "Shall be poured out." See *Margin*. Upon this and the two next verses, compare xviii. 15—18.

14. "Neither yet of the envious," &c. This clause is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

15. "He openeth his mouth," &c. To proclaim the good deed that he hath done.

17. "For he knoweth not aright," &c. This latter part of the verse is not in the LXX., and a different sense is given to it in the Vulgate.

18. "So the fall of the wicked," &c. That is, by misuse of the tongue.

19. "An unseasonable tale," &c. The *Margin* gives the sense of a different Greek reading.

21. "Through want;" i.e. through poverty, and so through want

ECCLESIASTICUS, XX.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.
g ch. 42. 1.

22 ^g There is that destroyeth his own soul through bashfulness, and by accepting of persons overthroweth himself.

h ch. 25. 2.

23 There is that for bashfulness promiseth to his friend, and maketh him his enemy for nothing.

24 ^h A lie is a foul blot in a man, yet it is continually in the mouth of the untaught.

25 A thief is better than a man that is accustomed to lie: but they both shall have destruction to heritage.

² Or,
ignominy.

26 The disposition of a liar is ² dishonourable, and his shame is ever with him.

27 A wise man shall promote himself *to honour* with his words: and he that hath understanding will please great men.

ⁱ Prov. 12. 11.
& 23. 19.

28 ⁱ He that tilleth his land shall increase his heap: and he that pleaseth great men shall get pardon for iniquity.

^k Exod. 23. 8.
Deut. 16. 19.

29 ^k Presents and gifts blind the eyes of the wise, and ³ stop up his mouth that he cannot reprove.

³ Or, as a
muzzle in
the mouth.

30 Wisdom that is hid, and treasure that is hoarded up, what profit is in them both?

^j ch. 41. 15.

31 ^j Better is he that hideth his folly than a man that hideth his wisdom.

32 Necessary patience in seeking the Lord is better than he that leadeth his life without a guide.

CHAPTER XXI.

² Flee from sin as from a serpent. ⁴ His oppression will undo the rich. ⁹ The end of the unjust shall be nought. ¹² The difference between the fool and the wise.

of means, and it may be also of opportunities; and so he will escape the remorse of conscience which otherwise might have troubled his rest.

23. "That for bashfulness;" i.e. being led into sin through false shame. On the last clause, compare iv. 22, 27.

"Maketh him his enemy," &c.; i.e. by not performing his promise.

25. See v. 14, and the *Note* there. The "man that is accustomed to lie" will often steal a man's character by slander, and is therefore worse than a common thief. "To heritage;" i.e. for their inheritance.

27. In some MSS. the title "PROVERBS" is prefixed to the section beginning here and ending with the chapter.

32. This verse is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate. Its meaning appears to be,—The man that seeks the Lord, in order that he may guide himself by the Divine law, although he will have "need of patience" (Heb. x. 36.), is better—happier—than he who has no other guidance in life than his own reason or will.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXI.

MY son, hast thou sinned? do so no more, but ^aask pardon for thy former sins.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

2 Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest too near it, it will bite thee: the teeth thereof are as the teeth of a lion, slaying the souls of men.

^a Ps. 41. 4.
Luke 15. 21.

3 All iniquity is as a two edged sword, the wounds whereof cannot be healed.

4 To terrify and do wrong will waste riches: thus the house of proud men shall be made desolate.

5 ^bA prayer out of a poor man's mouth reacheth to the ears of God, and his judgment cometh speedily.

^b Exod. 3. 9.
& 22. 23.
Ps. 34. 6.

6 ^cHe that hateth to be reprov'd is in the way of sinners: but he that feareth the Lord will ²repent from his heart.

^c Prov. 12. 1.
& 15. 10.
² Gr. *be converted*.

7 An eloquent man is known far and near; but a man of understanding knoweth when he slippeth.

8 ^dHe that buildeth his house with other men's money is like one that gathereth himself stones for the tomb of his burial.

^d Jer. 22. 13.

9 ^eThe congregation of the wicked is like tow wrapped together: and the end of them is a flame of fire to destroy them.

^e ch. 16. 6.

10 The way of sinners is made plain with stones, but at the end thereof is the pit of hell.

11 ^fHe that keepeth the law of the Lord getteth the understanding thereof: and the perfection of the fear of the Lord is wisdom.

^f John 7. 17.

12 ^gHe that is not ³wise will not be taught: ^hbut there is a wisdom which multiplieth bitterness.

^g Prov. 1. 7.
³ Or, *witty*.
^h Eccles. 1. 18.

13 The ⁴knowledge of a wise man shall abound

⁴ Or, *subtily*.

CHAPTER XXI.

3. "Cannot be healed;" i.e. by the skill of man. But compare *Collect for St. Luke's Day*.

6. "In the way of sinners;" i.e. the way that leadeth to destruction.

7. "When he slippeth;" i.e. when the eloquent man slippeth, "a man of understanding" is not to be imposed on by his eloquence, as the multitude often are.

8. "For the tomb of his burial." Because he is heaping up ruin to himself.

10. "Is made plain." Like a road paved "with stones," and so made easy. "Facilis descensus Averni."

11. See i. 5, 16; xxv. 11.

12. "There is a wisdom," &c. See xix. 22, 24. Jer. iv. 22.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

¹ ch. 33. 5,

like a flood : and his counsel is like a pure fountain of life.

14 ¹ The inner parts of a fool are like a broken vessel, and he will hold no knowledge as long as he liveth.

^k Prov. 9. 9.

15 If a skilful man hear a wise word, he will commend it, and ^k add unto it : but as soon as one of no understanding heareth it, it displeaseth him, and he casteth it behind his back.

16 The talking of a fool is like a burden in the way : but grace shall be found in the lips of the wise.

17 They enquire at the mouth of the wise man in the congregation, and they shall ponder his words in their heart.

² Or, not to
be enquired
after.

18 As is a house that is destroyed, so is wisdom to a fool : and the knowledge of the unwise is as talk ² without sense.

19 Doctrine unto fools is as fetters on the feet, and like manacles on the right hand.

¹ ch. 19. 30.

20 ¹ A fool lifteth up his voice with laughter ; but a wise man doth scarce smile a little.

21 Learning is unto a wise man as an ornament of gold, and like a bracelet upon his right arm.

22 A foolish man's foot is soon in his [neighbour's] house : but a man of experience is ashamed of him.

23 A fool will peep in at the door into the house : but he that is well nurtured will stand without.

24 It is the rudeness of a man to hearken at the door : but a wise man will be grieved with the disgrace.

25 The lips of talkers will be telling such things as pertain not unto them : but the words of such as have understanding are weighed in the balance.

16. "The talking of a fool," &c., gives no assistance, but rather impedes us in our course, like the carrying of a burden. See xxii. 15.

18. "As is a house that is destroyed," and so become no better than a heap of rubbish, such "is wisdom to a fool."

22. See Prov. xxv. 17, *Margin*. The Vulgate gives quite a different sense to the latter clause.

25. "Are weighed" (rather, "will be weighed") "in the balance." Will be well considered before they are uttered, and therefore are not likely to be idle or irrelevant.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXII.

26 The heart of fools is in their mouth : but the mouth of the wise is in their heart.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

27 When the ungodly curseth Satan, he curseth his own soul.

28 ^m A whisperer defileth his own soul, and is ^m ch. 28. 13. hated wheresoever he dwelleth.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 Of the slothful man, 3 and a foolish daughter. 11 Weep rather for fools, than for the dead. 13 Meddle not with them. 16 The wise man's heart will not shrink. 20 What will lose a friend.

A SLOTHFUL man is compared to a filthy stone, and every one will hiss him out to his disgrace.

2 A slothful man is compared to the filth of a dunghill : every man that takes it up will shake his hand.

3 An evilnurtured son is the dishonour of his father that begat him : and a [foolish] daughter is born to his loss.

4 ^a A wise daughter ² shall bring an inheritance to her husband : but she that liveth dishonestly is her father's heaviness.

^a Prov. 13. 22
² Or.
shall be the
heir of her
husband.

5 She that is bold dishonoureth both her father and her husband, but they both shall despise her.

6 A tale out of season [is as] musick in mourning : but stripes and correction of wisdom are never out of time.

7 Whoso teacheth a fool is as one that glueth a potsherd together, and as he that waketh one from a sound sleep.

8 He that telleth a tale to a fool speaketh to one

26. "But the mouth of the wise," &c. They utter only what they have first well considered.

27. "He curseth his own soul." Because he has made it as a child of Satan.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. This and the following verse exhibit in very strong language the odious character of slothfulness, which unfits a man for taking his proper place among his fellows.

7. "Is as one that glueth," &c. Because there is little hope that his labour will turn to any real or lasting good. By "a fool" is here meant one who has no understanding in the way of godliness. See below, vv. 11, 12. The latter clause is not in the Vulgate, and seems to be an interpolation suggested by the following verse.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

² Or, *an art.*

in a slumber: when he hath told his tale, he will say, What is the matter?

9 If children live honestly, and have ²wherewithal, they shall cover the baseness of their parents.

10 But children, being haughty, through disdain and want of nurture do stain the nobility of their kindred.

^b ch. 38. 16.

11 ^b Weep for the dead, for he hath lost the light: and weep for the fool, for he wanteth understanding: make little weeping for the dead, for he is at rest: but the life of the fool is worse than death.

^c Gen. 50. 10.

12 ^c Seven days do men mourn for him that is dead; but for a fool and an ungodly man all the days of his life.

^d ch. 12. 12.

13 Talk not much with a fool, and go not to him that hath no understanding: ^dbeware of him, lest thou have trouble, and thou shalt never be defiled with his fooleries: depart from him, and thou shalt find rest, and never be ⁴disquieted with madness.

³ Or, *when he shakes off his filth.*

⁴ Or, *wearied.*

14 What is heavier than lead? and what is the name thereof, but a fool?

^e Prov. 27. 3.

15 ^e Sand, and salt, and a mass of iron, is easier to bear, than a man without understanding.

16 As timber girt and bound together in a building cannot be loosed with shaking: so the heart that is stablished by advised counsel shall fear at no time.

⁵ Or, *of a polished wall.*

17 A heart settled upon a thought of understanding is as a fair plaistering ⁵on the wall of a gallery.

9. This and the following verse are not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate. "Have wherewithal;" i.e. to support themselves. The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading.

10. So Horace, IV. *Od.* iv. 35:

"Utcunque defecere mores,
Indecorant bene nata culpæ."

15. See xxi. 16, and the reference in *Margin*. There is great propriety in the selection of the three articles here mentioned as burdensome to carry. Rock salt, being always more or less damp, is heavier on that account; and in consequence of its weight, the sacks for carrying it are made smaller than those used for carrying grain.

16. In this and the two following verses, the constancy of the wise man, and the advantages which he derives from it, are contrasted with the instability of the foolish, and the ruin to which it so often leads. Compare Ps. cxii. 6, 7, and Matt. vii. 24—27.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXII.

18 Pales set on an high place will never stand against the wind: so a fearful heart in the imagination of a fool cannot stand against any fear.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

19 He that pricketh the eye will make tears to fall: and he that pricketh the heart maketh it to shew her knowledge.

20 Whoso casteth a stone at the birds frayeth them away: and he that ^fupbraideth his friend breaketh ^fch. 41. 22. friendship.

21 Though thou drewest a sword at thy friend, yet despair not: for there may be a returning [to favour.]

22 If thou hast opened thy mouth against thy friend, fear not; for there may be a reconciliation: except for upbraiding, or pride, or ^gdisclosing of ^gch. 27. 17. secrets, or a treacherous wound: for for these things & 41. 23. every friend will depart.

23 Be faithful to thy neighbour in his poverty, that thou mayest rejoice in his prosperity: abide stedfast unto him in the time of his trouble, that thou mayest be heir with him in his heritage: for a mean estate is not always to be contemned: nor the rich that is foolish to be had in admiration.

24 As the vapour and smoke of a furnace goeth before the fire; so reviling before blood.

25 I will not be ashamed to defend a friend; neither will I hide myself from him.

26 And if any evil happen unto me by him, every one that heareth it will beware of him.

27 ^hWho shall set a watch before my mouth, and ^hPs. 141. 3. a seal of wisdom upon my lips, that I fall not suddenly by them, and that my tongue destroy me not?

19. "Pricketh the heart;" i.e. by reproof, which may or may not be deserved; and in either case the "knowledge" of the heart, its sound or unsound condition, is shown by the manner in which the reproof is received. Some understand here nothing more than "her sense of pain."

23. "For a mean estate . . . nor the rich," &c. These two last clauses of the verse are not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

24. "As the vapour," &c. So provocation and injurious words are wont to lead to the shedding of blood.

27. "Who shall set a watch?" &c. This interrogation is intended to express a wish,—“O that some one would,” &c. So also in the next chapter, ver. 2.

Before
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CHAPTER XXIII.

1 *A prayer for grace to flee sin.* 9 *We may not use swearing:* 14 *but remember our parents.* 16 *Of three sorts of sin.* 23 *The adulterous wife sinneth many ways.*

O LORD, Father and Governor of all my whole life, leave me not to their counsels, and let me not fall by them.

2 Who will set scourges over my thoughts, and the discipline of wisdom over mine heart? that they spare me not for mine ignorances, and it pass not by my sins:

3 lest mine ignorances increase, and my sins abound to my destruction, and I fall before mine adversaries, and mine enemy rejoice over me, whose hope is far from thy mercy.

4 O Lord, Father and God of my life, give me not a proud look, but turn away from thy servants always ² a haughty mind.

² Or, a giant-like.

5 Turn away from me vain hopes and concupiscence, and thou shalt hold him up that is desirous always to serve thee.

6 Let not the greediness of the belly nor lust of the flesh take hold of me; and give not over me thy servant into an impudent mind.

7 Hear, O ye children, the discipline of the mouth: he that keepeth it shall never be taken in his lips.

8 The sinner shall be left in his foolishness: both the evil speaker and the proud shall fall thereby.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. "Leave me not to their counsels." If the MSS. are to be depended on, this must be taken in connection with the last verse of the foregoing chapter, and must refer to the counsels of the lips.

2. "That they," &c.; i.e. the scourges.

"And it," &c.; i.e. the discipline of wisdom. But the text of the verse is uncertain.

3. "Whose hope is far," &c. This clause is not in the Vulgate.

4. "But turn away," &c. This clause is not in the LXX.; and instead of the next verse it has only, "and turn away concupiscence from me."

7. In some MSS. the title, "Discipline of the Mouth," is prefixed to the section beginning here and continuing up to ver. 16.

"Shall never be taken," &c.; i.e. caught as in a snare.

8. "Shall fall thereby;" i.e. by being such as they are; in other words, by their evil speaking, and by their pride.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXIII.

9 ^aAccustom not thy mouth to swearing; neither use thyself to the naming of the Holy One.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

10 For as a servant that is continually beaten shall not be without a blue mark: so he that swear-^aeth and nameth God continually shall not be faultless.

^a Exod. 20. 7.
ch. 27. 14.
Matt. 5. 33,
34.

11 A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with iniquity, and the plague shall never depart from his house: if he shall offend, his sin shall be upon him: and if he acknowledge not his sin, he maketh a double offence: and if he swear in vain, he shall not be ²innocent, but his house shall ²be full of calamities.

² Gr. *justified*.

12 ^bThere is a word that is clothed about with death: God grant that it be not found in the heritage of Jacob; for all such things shall be far from the godly, and they shall not wallow in their sins.

^b Lev. 24. 15,
16.

13 Use not thy mouth to intemperate swearing, for therein is the word of sin.

14 Remember thy father and thy mother, when thou sittest among great men. Be not forgetful before them, and so thou by thy custom become a fool, and wish that thou hadst not been born, and ^ccurse the day of thy nativity.

^c Job 3. 1, &c.

15 ^dThe man that is accustomed to opprobrious words will never be reformed all the days of his life.

^d 2 Sam. 16. 7.

16 Two sorts of men multiply sin, and the third will bring wrath: a hot mind is as a burning fire, it will never be quenched till it be consumed: a fornicator in the body of his flesh will never cease till he hath kindled a fire.

11. "If he shall offend," &c. This appears to mean, "If he shall swear, being conscious that he ought not to do so."

"And if he swear in vain;" i.e. "if he shall swear and break his oath."

12. "There is a word," &c. See the reference in the *Margin*, which indicates that blasphemy is probably meant.

14. The text of much of this verse is uncertain. It appears to suppose the case of one of humble birth elevated into the society of men of higher station.

"By thy custom;" i.e. by presuming upon the elevation thou hast become accustomed to, or by thy undue familiarity.

16. Compare xxv. 1, 2. Prov. xxx. 15, 18. The three sorts of men appear to be,—the passionate man, the fornicator, and the adulterer.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXIII.

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cir. 200.

^e Prov. 9. 17.

^f Job 24. 15.
Ps. 10. 11.
Is. 29. 15.

^g ch. 15. 19.

^h Gen. 1. 31.

ⁱ Lev. 20. 10.
Deut. 22. 22.

² Or,
a stranger.

^k Exod. 20. 14.

³ Or,
visitation.

¹ Wisd. 4. 3.

17 ^eAll bread is sweet to a whoremonger, he will not leave off till he die.

18 A man that breaketh wedlock, saying thus in his heart, ^fWho seeth me? I am compassed about with darkness, the walls cover me, and no body seeth me; what need I to fear? the most High will not remember my sins:

19 such a man only feareth the eyes of men, and knoweth not that the eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, ^gbeholding all the ways of men, and considering the most secret parts.

20 He knew all things ere ever they were created; ^hso also after they were perfected he looked upon them all.

21 ⁱThis man shall be punished in the streets of the city, and where he suspecteth not he shall be taken.

22 Thus shall it go also with the wife that leaveth her husband, and bringeth in an heir by ²another.

23 For first, she hath disobeyed the ^klaw of the most High; and secondly, she hath trespassed against her own husband; and thirdly, she hath played the whore in adultery, and brought children by another man.

24 She shall be brought out into the congregation, and ³inquisition shall be made of her children.

25 Her ¹children shall not take root, and her branches shall bring forth no fruit.

26 She shall leave her memory to be cursed, and her reproach shall not be blotted out.

27 And they that remain shall know that there is nothing better than the fear of the Lord, and that there is nothing sweeter than to take heed unto the commandments of the Lord.

28 It is great glory to follow the Lord, and to be received of him is long life.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 Wisdom doth praise herself, shew her beginning, 4 her dwelling, 13 her glory, 17 her fruit, 26 her increase and perfection.

WISDOM shall praise herself, and shall glory in the midst of her people.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

2 In the congregation of the most High shall she open her mouth, and triumph before his power.

The praise
of Wisdom.

3 I came out of the mouth of the most High, and covered the earth as a ²cloud.

² Or, a mist.

4 ^aI dwelt in high places, and ^bmy throne is in a cloudy pillar.

^a Job 22. 14.

^b Ps. 104. 3.

5 I alone compassed the circuit of heaven, and walked in the bottom of the deep.

6 In the waves of the sea, and in all the earth, and in every people and nation, I got a possession.

7 With all these I sought rest: and in whose inheritance shall I abide?

8 So the Creator of all things gave me a commandment, and he that made me caused my tabernacle to rest, and said, Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thine inheritance in Israel.

9 He ^ccreated me from the beginning before the world, and I shall never fail.

^c Prov. 8. 22.

10 In the ^dholy tabernacle I served before him; and so was I established in Sion.

^d Ex. 31. 3.

11 ^eLikewise in the ³beloved city he gave me rest, and in Jerusalem was my power.

^e Ps. 132. 8,
13, 14.

³ Or, holy.

12 And I took root in an honourable people, even in the portion of the Lord's inheritance.

13 I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a cypress tree upon the mountains of Hermon.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. With this chapter, which in the LXX. has the title "The Praise of Wisdom" (see *Margin*), compare Prov. viii. and Wisd. vii.

"Shall praise herself." The LXX. and Vulgate have, "shall praise her soul," the soul which God hath given her. From this verse to ver. 23, Wisdom is introduced as speaking in her own person. According to the author of the *Synopsis*, we have here "a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ."

2. This is to be understood of Wisdom as revealed in the Jewish Scriptures, which were read in their synagogues (see ver. 23.), and as triumphing, through the fulfilment of God's word, more especially on occasions when His power was made manifest; as in the passage over Jordan, the fall of Jericho, &c.

11. "The beloved city." The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading.

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² Or, *Cades*.

³ Or, *in the water*.

14 I was exalted like a palm tree in ²En-gaddi, and as a rose plant in Jericho, as a fair olive tree in a pleasant field, and grew up as a plane tree ³by the water.

^f Exod. 30, 34, 35.

15 I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon and aspalathus, and I yielded a pleasant odour like the best myrrh, as galbanum, and onyx, and sweet storax, and as the fume of ^ffrankincense in the tabernacle.

16 As the turpentine tree I stretched out my branches, and my branches are the branches of honour and grace.

^g John 15, 1.

17 ^gAs the vine brought I forth pleasant savour, and my flowers are the fruit of honour and riches.

⁴ Or, *chosen*.

18 I am the mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope: I therefore, being eternal, am given to all my children which are ⁴named of him.

^h Is. 55, 1.

19 ^hCome unto me, all ye that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with my fruits.

ⁱ Ps. 119, 10, 11.

20 For my memorial is ⁱsweeter than honey, and mine inheritance than the honeycomb.

21 They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty.

22 He that obeyeth me shall never be confounded, and they that work by me shall not do amiss.

^k Exod. 20, 1. & 24, 3. Deut. 4, 1. & 29, 1. & 33, 4.

23 All these things are the book of the covenant of the most high God, *even* the ^klaw which Moses commanded for an heritage unto the congregations of Jacob.

14. "In En-gaddi." This is the reading of the Complutensian text. The LXX. has, "on the shore;" the Vulgate, as in the *Margin*.

15. "Aspalathus." The Vulgate has, "aromatic balsam." Compare the passage of Exodus referred to in the *Margin*.

16. "My branches are the branches of honour and grace." See the two next verses.

16—18. "Honour and grace," and "honour and" (true) "riches," and "fair love, and" (holy) "fear, and knowledge, and holy hope,"—all are the produce of true wisdom.

18. No part of this verse is in the LXX., and the latter clause is given quite differently in the Vulgate.

23. At this verse Wisdom ceases to speak in her own person. The author proceeds to recommend what she has said as deriving its authority from "the Book of the Covenant," the Law given by God to Moses.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXV.

24 Faint not to be strong in the Lord; that he may confirm you, cleave unto him: ¹for the Lord Almighty is God alone, and beside him there is no other Saviour. Before
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Is. 45. 21.

25 He filleth all things with his wisdom, as Phison and as Tigris in the time of the new ^m Gen. 2. 11. fruits.

26 He maketh the understanding to abound like Euphrates, and as ⁿ Jordan in the time of the harvest. n Josh. 3. 15.

27 He maketh the doctrine of knowledge appear as the light, and as Geon in the time of vintage.

28 The first man knew her not perfectly: no more shall the last find her out.

29 For her thoughts are more than the sea, and her counsels profounder than the great deep.

30 I also came out as a ²brook from a river, ² Or, *drain*,
or, *ditch*. and as a conduit into a garden.

31 I said, I will water my best garden, and will water abundantly my garden bed: and, lo, my brook became a river, and my river became a sea.

32 I will yet make doctrine to shine as the morning, and will send forth her light afar off.

33 I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy, and leave it to all ages for ever.

34 ° Behold that I have not laboured for myself ° ch. 33. 17. only, but for all them that seek wisdom.

CHAPTER XXV.

What things are beautiful, and what hateful. 6 What is the crown of age. 7 What things make men happy. 13 Nothing worse than a wicked woman.

[N three things I ³was beautified, and stood up ³ Or, *gloried*.
^a Gen. 13. 8.
Ps. 133 1.
Rom. 12. 10. beautiful both before God and men: the ^aunity

24. This verse is not in the LXX.

27. "As the light." Some translate, "as the river," i.e. the Nile. "As Geon;" or, Gihon. See Gen. ii. 13. It would seem that this river was famous for the purity and clearness of its water, especially in the time of vintage.

33. "Doctrine as prophecy," &c. This may mean,—No less certain than prophecy, or, no less profound; and only to be learnt by inspiration from above.

CHAPTER XXV.

1. "In three things I was beautified," &c. The Vulgate renders
O o

Before
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of brethren, the love of neighbours, a man and a wife that agree together.

2 Three sorts of men my soul hateth, and I am greatly offended at their life: a poor man that is proud, a rich man that is a liar, and an old adulterer that doateth.

3 If thou hast gathered nothing in thy youth, how canst thou find any thing in thine age?

4 O how comely a thing is judgment for gray hairs, and for ancient men to know counsel!

5 O how comely is the wisdom of old men, and understanding and counsel to men of honour!

6 Much experience is the crown of old men, and the fear of God is their glory.

7 There be nine things which I have judged in mine heart to be happy, and the tenth I will utter with my tongue: A man that hath joy of his children; and he that liveth to see the fall of his enemy:

b ch. 14. 1.
& 19. 16.
James 3. 2.

8 well is him that dwelleth with a wife of understanding, and that hath not ^bslipped with his tongue, and that hath not served a man more unworthy than himself:

² Or, a
friend.

9 well is him that hath found ²prudence, and he that speaketh in the ears of them that will hear:

c Prov. 3. 13.

10 ^cO how great is he that findeth wisdom! yet is there none above him that feareth the Lord.

it: "Three things my spirit delights in, and they are approved in the sight of God and man." Field has pointed out that it is not Wisdom who is now speaking, and therefore some alteration of the text is necessary, as "beautiful" in the Greek must be feminine, or neuter plural. Accordingly, he suggests: "In three things which are beautiful, &c., do I take pleasure and am elated," i.e. when I see them. From this chapter the author resumes the thread of his proverbial sayings,—arranging them somewhat more methodically,—and continues it to chap. xlii. 15.

7—9. "There be nine things," &c.; viz. 1. Joy in children. 2. The fall of an enemy. 3. A wife of understanding. 4. A faultless tongue. 5. Freedom from unworthy service. 6. Prudence. 7. Attentive hearers. 8. Wisdom. 9. Fear of the Lord. 10. Love of the Lord. No exception can be taken to any of these except the second, upon which compare St. Matt. v. 43. "Well is him;" i.e. to him. Compare Ps. cxxviii. 2, Prayer-Book Version.

9. "Prudence." This is the reading of the LXX. That in the *Margin* is from the Vulgate, which, however, has "a true friend."

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXV.

11 But the love of the Lord passeth all things for illumination: he that holdeth it, ² whereto shall he be likened? Before
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12 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of his love: and faith is the beginning of cleaving unto him. ² Or,
to whom.

13 [Give me] any plague, but the plague of the heart: ^d and any wickedness, but the wickedness of a woman: d ver. 19.

14 and any affliction, but the affliction from them that hate me: and any revenge, but the revenge of enemies.

15 There is no head above the head of a serpent; and there is no wrath above the wrath of an enemy.

16 ^e I had rather dwell with a lion and a dragon, ^e Prov. 21. 19.
& 25. 24. than to keep house with a wicked woman.

17 The wickedness of a woman changeth her face, and darkeneth her countenance ³ like sackcloth. ³ Or, like
a bear.

18 Her husband shall sit among his neighbours; and when he heareth it shall sigh bitterly.

19 ^f All wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman: let the portion of a sinner fall upon her. ^f ver. 13.

20 As the climbing up a sandy way is to the feet of the aged, so is a wife ⁴ full of words to a quiet man. ⁴ Or,
scolding.

21 ^g Stumble not at the beauty of a woman, and desire her not for pleasure. ^g 2 Sam. 11. 2.
ch. 42. 12.

22 A woman, if she maintain her husband, is full of anger, impudence, and much reproach.

23 A wicked woman abateth the courage, maketh an heavy countenance and a wounded heart: a woman that will not comfort her husband in distress maketh weak hands and feeble knees.

11. "Passeth all things for illumination." See xxi. 11.

12. This verse is not in the LXX.

15. "Above the head of a serpent." The Vulgate has, "worse than the head of a serpent;" because the venom of serpents lies chiefly in their head and teeth. Some render it, "No poison exceeds serpents' poison."

17. "Like sackcloth." The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXVI.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

^h Gen. 3. 6.
Tim. 2. 14.

24 Of ^h the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die.

25 Give the water no passage; neither a wicked woman liberty to gad abroad.

26 If she go not as thou wouldest have her, cut her off from thy flesh, and ⁱ give her a bill of divorce, and let her go.

ⁱ Deut. 24. 1.
Mark 10. 4.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 *A good wife, 4 and a good conscience, do glad men. 6 A wicked wife is a fearful thing. 13 Of good and bad wives. 28 Of three things that are grievous. 29 Merchants and hucksters are not without sin.*

^a Prov. 31.
10, &c.

BLESSED is the man that hath ^a a virtuous wife, for the number of his days shall be double.

2 A virtuous woman rejoiceth her husband, and he shall fulfil the years of his life in peace.

^b Prov. 18.
22.

3 ^b A good wife is a good portion, which shall be given in the portion of them that fear the Lord.

4 Whether a man be rich or poor, if he have a good heart toward the Lord, he shall at all times rejoice with a cheerful countenance.

² Gr. an
evil report.

5 There be three things that mine heart feareth; and for the fourth I was sore afraid: ² the slander of a city, the gathering together of an unruly multitude, and a false accusation: all these are worse than death.

6 But a grief of heart and sorrow is a woman that is jealous over another woman, and a scourge of the tongue which communicateth with all.

³ Or, a yoke
of oxen.

7 An evil wife is ³ a yoke shaken to and fro: he that hath hold of her is as though he held a scorpion.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. "The number of his days," &c. Shall be prolonged through the comfort of her society; or the enjoyment of his life will be such that the length of it may be said to be doubled; according to the sentiment of Martial,—

. "hoc est
Vivere bis, vitâ posse priore frui."

6. "And a scourge of the tongue," &c. Rather, "the scourge of her tongue:" the tongue of the jealous woman, which does not refrain itself, but makes known to all her fancied wrongs.

7. "A yoke shaken to and fro." A yoke not fitting the necks of the oxen is a constant annoyance to them; such is an evil wife to

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXVI.

8 A drunken woman and a gadder abroad causeth great anger, and she will not cover her own shame. Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

9 The whoredom of a woman may be known in her haughty looks and eyelids.

10 ^c If thy daughter be shameless, keep her in ^c ch. 42. 11. straitly, lest she abuse herself through overmuch liberty.

11 Watch over an impudent eye: and marvel not if she trespass against thee.

12 She will open her mouth, as a thirsty traveller when he hath found a fountain, and drink of every water near her: by every ² hedge will she sit down, ² Or, stake. and open her quiver against every arrow.

13 The grace of a wife delighteth her husband, and her discretion will fatten his bones.

14 A silent and loving woman is a gift of the Lord: and there is nothing so much worth as a mind well instructed.

15 A shamefaced and faithful woman is a double grace, and her continent mind cannot be valued.

16 As the sun when it ariseth ³ in the high heaven; so is the beauty of a good wife in the ⁴ ordering of her house. ³ Gr. in
the highest
places of the
Lord.

17 As the clear light is upon the holy candlestick; so is the beauty of the face ⁵ in ripe age. ⁴ Or,
ornament.

18 As the golden pillars are upon the sockets of silver; so are the ⁶ fair feet with a constant ⁷ heart. ⁵ Or, in constant age.

19 My son, keep the flower of thine age sound; and give not thy strength to strangers. ⁶ Or, comely.
⁷ Or, breast.

20 When thou hast gotten a fruitful possession through all the field, sow it with thine own seed, trusting in the goodness of thy stock.

21 So thy race which thou leavest shall be magnified, having the confidence of their good descent.

er husband. Or it may refer to the yoking of two oxen, who do not pull evenly together; such is the want of harmony between an evil wife and her yokefellow.

18. The text of this verse is uncertain.

19. This and the following verses, to ver. 28, are not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

"To strangers;" i.e. strange women. See Prov. ii. 16; v. 3, 20.

20. A virtuous wife is represented under the similitude of a fruitful field.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXVII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

² Or,
a swine.

22 An harlot shall be accounted as ²spittle; but a married woman is a tower against death to her husband.

23 A wicked woman is given as a portion to a wicked man: but a godly woman is given to him that feareth the Lord.

24 A dishonest woman contemneth shame: but an honest woman will reverence her husband.

25 A shameless woman shall be counted as a dog; but she that is shamefaced will fear the Lord.

26 A woman that honoureth her husband shall be judged wise of all; but she that dishonoureth him in her pride shall be counted ungodly of all.

27 A loud crying woman and a scold shall be sought out to drive away the enemies.

28 There be two things that grieve my heart; and the third maketh me angry: a man of war that suffereth poverty; and ^dmen of understanding that are not set by; and ^eone that returneth from righteousness to sin; the Lord prepareth such an one for the sword.

^f ch. 27. 2. 29 ^f A merchant shall hardly keep himself from doing wrong; and an huckster shall not be freed from sin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

¹ Of sins in selling and buying. ⁷ Our speech will tell what is in us. ¹⁶ A friend is lost by discovering his secrets. ²⁵ He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it.

^a Prov. 23.
21.

³ Or, a thing
indifferent.

^b Prov. 23. 4.
¹ Tim. 6. 9.

MANY ^ahave sinned for ³a small matter; and he that ^bseeketh for abundance will turn his eyes away.

2 As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of

27. "Shall be sought out to drive away," &c. As only fit for such a purpose by the noise she makes.

28. "A man of war," &c.; i.e. a brave man, who has served his country in battle.

"Not set by;" i.e. not duly esteemed. See 1 Sam. xviii. 30. Ps. xv. 4, Prayer-Book Version.

29. "An huckster." A retail dealer.

"Freed from sin." The Vulgate confines this to sins of the lips.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. "For a small matter;" i.e. in order to gain what is of little worth.

"Will turn his eyes away;" i.e. from God; and consequently from what is just and right.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXVII.

the stones; so doth sin stick close between buying and selling.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

3 Unless a man hold himself diligently in the fear of the Lord, his house shall soon be overthrown.

4 As when one sifteth with a sieve, the refuse remaineth; so the filth of man in his ² talk.

² Or, *thought*.

5 ^c The furnace proveth the potter's vessels; so the trial of man is in his reasoning.

^c Prov. 27.
21.

6 ^d The fruit declareth if the tree have been dressed; so is the utterance of a conceit in the heart of man.

^d Matt. 7. 17.

7 Praise no man before thou hearest him speak; for this is the trial of men.

8 If thou followest righteousness, thou shalt obtain her, and put her on, as a glorious long robe.

9 The birds will resort unto their like; so will truth return unto them that practise in her.

10 As the lion lieth in wait for the prey; so sin for them that work iniquity.

11 The discourse of a godly man is always with wisdom; but a fool changeth as the moon.

12 If thou be among the indiscreet, observe the time; but be continually among men of understanding.

13 The discourse of fools is irksome, and their sport is the wantonness of sin.

14 ^e The talk of him that sweareth much maketh the hair stand upright; and their brawls make one stop his ears.

^e ch. 23. 9.

15 The strife of the proud is bloodshedding, and their revilings are grievous to the ear.

16 Whoso discovereth secrets loseth his credit; and shall never find friend to his mind.

17 Love thy friend, and be faithful unto him: but

11. There is no surer sign of a godly man than the uniform wisdom of his discourse; and no surer sign of a foolish man than his instability in word and deed.

12. "Observe the time;" i.e. speak and act with all the caution which the occasion will require.

15. "Is bloodshedding;" i.e. is of such a nature that it too often leads to the shedding of blood.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXVII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

f ch. 22. 22.

^f if thou bewrayest his secrets, follow no more after him.

18 For as a man hath destroyed his enemy; so hast thou lost the love of thy neighbour.

19 As one that letteth a bird go out of his hand, so hast thou let thy neighbour go, and shalt not get him again.

20 Follow after him no more, for he is too far off; he is as a roe escaped out of the snare.

21 As for a wound, it may be bound up; and after reviling there may be reconciliation: but he that bewrayeth secrets is without hope.

f Prov. 10.
10.

22 He ^g that winketh with the eyes worketh evil: and he that knoweth him will depart from him.

23 When thou art present, he will speak sweetly, and will admire thy words: but at the last he will ² writhe his mouth, and slander thy sayings.

² Or, alter
his speech.

24 I have hated many things, but nothing like him; for the Lord will hate him.

25 Whoso casteth a stone on high casteth it on his own head; and a deceitful stroke shall make wounds.

h Ps. 7. 15.
Prov. 26. 27.
Eccles. 10. 8.
i Ps. 9. 15.
& 35. 8.

26 ^h Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and ⁱ he that setteth a trap shall be taken therein.

27 He that worketh mischief, it shall fall upon him, and he shall not know whence it cometh.

k Deut. 32. 35.
Rom. 12. 19.

28 Mockery and reproach are from the proud; but ^k vengeance, as a lion, shall lie in wait for them.

29 They that rejoice at the fall of the righteous shall be taken in the snare; and anguish shall consume them before they die.

30 Malice and wrath, even these are abominations; and the sinful man shall have them both.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 Against revenge, 8 quarrelling, 10 anger, 15 and backbiting.

25. The same idea runs through this and the following verses, to the end of the chapter, viz.: he that contrives evil by deed or word against others, will discover, sooner or later, that he has been plotting against himself. Add to the references in the *Margin*, Ps. xxxv. 8; lvii. 6. "Shall make wounds;" and not least, to himself.

30. The malice and wrath which the sinful man has cherished towards others shall recoil upon himself.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXVIII.

HE ^a that revengeth shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins [in remembrance.]

Before
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^a Deut. 32. 35.
Rom. 12. 19.
^b Matt. 6. 14.
Mark 11. 25.
Luke 6. 37.

2 ^b Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest.

3 ^c One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord?

^c See Matt.
18. 23, &c.

4 He sheweth no mercy to a man, which is like himself: and doth he ask forgiveness of his own sins?

5 If he that is but flesh nourish hatred, who will intreat for pardon of his sins?

6 Remember thy end, and let enmity cease; [remember] corruption and death, and abide in the commandments.

7 Remember the commandments, and bear no malice to thy neighbour: [remember] the covenant of the Highest, and wink at ignorance.

8 ^d Abstain from strife, and thou shalt diminish thy sins: for a furious man will kindle strife.

^d ch. 8. 1.

9 A sinful man disquieteth friends, and maketh debate among them that be at peace.

10 ^e As the matter of the fire is, so it burneth: and as a man's strength is, so is his wrath; and according to his riches his anger riseth; and the stronger they are which contend, the more they will be inflamed.

^e Prov. 26.
21.

11 An hasty contention kindleth a fire: and an hasty fighting sheddeth blood.

12 If thou blow the spark, it shall burn: if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched: and both these come out of thy mouth.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

7. "The covenant of the Highest." See Lev. xix. 18. Prov. xx. 22.

"Wink at ignorance." Overlook the offences which thy neighbour has committed against thee, through ignorance or inadvertence, or even through folly. For as wisdom is equivalent to godliness, so ignorance is sometimes used for foolishness and sin. See Num. xii. 11, in the LXX.; and above, xxiii. 3.

12. "And both these," &c. It is in thy power, therefore, either to inflame or to quench strife, according as thou usest "thy mouth," thy speech, kindly and wisely, or the reverse.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXVIII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

† ch. 21. 23.

13 [†] Curse the whisperer and doubletongued: for such have destroyed many that were at peace.

14 A backbiting tongue hath disquieted many, and driven them from nation to nation: strong cities hath it pulled down, and overthrown the houses of great men.

2 Or, *third*.

15 A ² backbiting tongue hath cast out virtuous women, and deprived them of their labours.

16 Whoso hearkeneth unto it shall never find rest, and never dwell quietly.

17 The stroke of the whip maketh marks in the flesh: but the stroke of the tongue breaketh the bones.

18 Many have fallen by the edge of the sword: but not so many as have fallen by the tongue.

19 Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the venom thereof; who hath not drawn the yoke thereof, nor hath been bound in her bands.

20 For the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of brass.

21 The death thereof is an evil death, the grave were better than it.

22 It shall not have rule over them that fear God, neither shall they be burned with the flame thereof.

23 Such as forsake the Lord shall fall into it; and it shall burn in them, and not be quenched; it shall be sent upon them as a lion, and devour them as a leopard.

24 Look that thou hedge thy possession about with thorns, and bind up thy silver and gold,

25 and weigh thy words in a balance, and make a door and bar for thy mouth.

15. "Deprived them of their labours." In causing them to be divorced by their husbands, and so depriving them of the benefits which their industry and economy had procured.

19. "Hath not drawn the yoke thereof." Hath not been subject to its thralldom, as oxen to the yoke.

21. "The death thereof," &c.; i.e. the destruction of our good name, which a slanderous tongue causeth, is an evil, a misfortune, worse than death itself.

24, 25. Caution and self-restraint are no less necessary for the government of the tongue, than the prudence which causes us to plant a

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXIX.

26 Beware thou slide not by it, lest thou fall before him that lieth in wait.

Before
CHRIST
cir 200.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1 *We must shew mercy and lend: 4 but the borrower must not defraud the lender. 9 Give alms. 14 A good man will not undo his surety. 18 To be surety and undertake for others is dangerous. 22 It is better to live at home than to sojourn.*

^a **H**E that is merciful will lend unto his neighbour; and he that strengtheneth his hand keepeth the commandments. ^a Ps. 37. 26.

2 ^b Lend to thy neighbour in time of his need, and pay thou thy neighbour again in due season. ^b Deut. 15. 8. Matt. 5. 42. Luke 6. 35.

3 Keep thy word, and deal faithfully with him, and thou shalt always find the thing that is necessary for thee.

4 Many, when a thing was lent them, reckoned it to be found, and put them to trouble that helped them.

5 Till he hath received, he will kiss a man's hand; and for his neighbour's money he will speak submissly: but when he should repay, he will prolong the time, and return words of grief, and complain of the time.

6 ² If he prevail, he shall hardly receive the half, and he will count as if he had found it: if not, he hath deprived him of his money, and he hath gotten him an enemy without cause: he payeth him with cursings and railings; and for honour he will pay him disgrace. ² Or, If he be able.

7 Many therefore have refused to lend for other men's ill dealing, fearing to be defrauded.

hedge about our field, or to put our money into a purse, is needful to secure them both.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. "He that strengtheneth his hand;" i.e. relieves and succours him. But the LXX. has, "He that strengtheneth him by his hand;" i.e. by helping him.

2. "And pay thou thy neighbour;" i.e. if thou hast borrowed from him.

6. "If he prevail," &c. This seems to mean, If the creditor prevail, it will still be only partially, and after so much trouble and difficulty, that he will consider the money as something found by good luck; or, if not partially, if he succeed in recovering the whole sum, the debtor will accuse him of robbing him of his money; and so he hath made himself an enemy, who will repay him with cursings, &c., when he ought to have made a friend to bless and honour him.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXIX.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

c Deut. 15.
11.

8 Yet have thou patience with a man in poor estate, and delay not to shew him mercy.

9 Help the poor for ^e the commandment's sake, and turn him not away because of his poverty.

d ch. 20. 30.

10 Lose thy money for thy brother and thy friend, and ^d let it not rust under a stone to be lost.

e Dan. 4. 27.
Matt. 6. 20.
Luke 11. 41.
& 12. 33.

11 ^e Lay up thy treasure according to the commandments of the most High, and ^f it shall bring thee more profit than gold.

Acts 10. 4.
1 Tim. 6. 18,
19.

12 ^g Shut up alms in thy storehouses: and it shall deliver thee from all affliction.

f Matt. 19. 21.
g Tobit 4. 7,
8, 9, 10, 11.
ch. 17. 22.

13 It shall fight for thee against thine enemies better than a mighty shield and strong spear.

14 An honest man is surety for his neighbour: but he that is impudent will ² forsake him.

2 Or, fail.

15 Forget not the friendship of thy surety, for he hath given his life for thee.

16 A sinner will overthrow the good estate of his surety:

17 and he that is of an unthankful mind will leave him [in danger] that delivered him.

18 Suretiship hath undone many of good estate, and shaken them as a wave of the sea: mighty men hath it driven from their houses, so that they wandered among strange nations.

19 A wicked man transgressing the commandments of the Lord shall fall into suretiship: and he that undertaketh and followeth other men's business for gain shall fall into suits.

20 Help thy neighbour according to thy power, and beware that thou thyself fall not into the same.

11. "Lay up thy treasure," &c., as in a storehouse, by laying it out in acts of charity, as God commands. So also in the next verse, "Shut up alms" implies that money spent in almsgiving is more effectually secured than if it were kept under lock and key. Or, the interpretation may be, Let thy wealth not be wasted, but carefully laid up, so that it may be applied, as occasion calls for it, to purposes of charity. And in like manner, what follows may mean, Among the stores which thou shuttest up, let a portion be reserved to be given as alms to the poor. Some, who prefer the latter sense, compare 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

15. "He hath given his life;" i.e. his means of livelihood.

20. "Into the same;" i.e. the same condition, so as to have occasion for the same help. Compare Gal. vi. 1.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXX.

21 The ^h chief thing for life is water, and bread, and clothing, and an house to cover shame. Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

22 Better is the life of a poor man in a mean ^h cottage, than delicate fare in another man's house. ch. 29. 26.

23 Be it little or much, ⁱ hold thee contented, that thou hear not the reproach of thy house. 1 Tim. 6. 6, 8.

24 For it is a miserable life to go from house to house: for where thou art a stranger, thou darest not open thy mouth.

25 Thou shalt entertain, and feast, and have no thanks: moreover thou shalt hear bitter words:

26 come, thou stranger, and furnish a table, and feed me of that thou hast ready.

27 Give place, thou stranger, to an honourable man; my brother cometh to be lodged, and I have need of mine house.

28 These things are grievous to a man of understanding; the upbraiding of houseroom, and reproaching of the lender.

CHAPTER XXX.

1 It is good to correct our children, 7 and not to cocker them. 14 Health is better than wealth. 22 Health and life are shortened by grief.

H^e ^a that loveth his son causeth him oft to feel the rod, that he may have joy of him in the end. Of children.
* Prov. 13. 24.
& 23. 13.

2 He that chastiseth his son shall have ² joy in him, and shall rejoice of him among his ³ acquaintance. ² Or, good by him.
³ Or, kinsfolk.

22. See below, xl. 28, 29.

23. "That thou hear not," &c. This clause is not in the LXX.

24. "Thou darest not open thy mouth;" i.e. to speak freely, still less to complain of the treatment thou mayest receive.

25. "And have no thanks." Because thou art only repaying, and in less proportion, what thou hast received.

CHAPTER XXX.

From this chapter to chap. xxxvi. inclusive there is much confusion, caused by differences of arrangement, not only of sentences or verses, but of entire chapters, in the best Greek MSS. The order here observed, which is that of the Complutensian text, is also followed in the edition of the LXX. referred to in these notes.

1. In some MSS. the title, "Of Children" (see *Margin*) is prefixed to the section beginning here and continued up to ver. 14.

2. "Shall have joy in him." The *Margin* represents a different Greek verb.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXX.

- Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.
b Deut. 6. 7. 3 He that ^b teacheth his son grieveth the enemy :
and before his friends he shall rejoice of him.
- c Ps. 123. 3, 6. 4 Though his father die, yet he is as though he
were not dead : for he hath left one behind him that
is like himself.
- 5 While he lived, he ^c saw and rejoiced in him :
and when he died, he was not sorrowful.
- 6 He left behind him an avenger against his ene-
mies, and one that shall requite kindness to his
friends.
- 7 He that maketh too much of his son shall bind
up his wounds ; and his bowels will be troubled at
every cry.
- 2 Or,
astonished. 8 An horse not broken becometh headstrong : and
a child left to himself will be wilful.
- 9 Cocker thy child, and he shall make thee ² afraid :
play with him, and he will bring thee to heaviness.
- 10 Laugh not with him, lest thou have sorrow
with him, and lest thou gnash thy teeth in the end.
- d ch. 7. 23. 11 ^d Give him no liberty in his youth, and wink
not at his follies.
- 12 Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat
him on the sides while he is a child, lest he wax
stubborn, and be disobedient unto thee, and so bring
sorrow to thine heart.
- 13 Chastise thy son, and hold him to labour, lest
his lewd behaviour be an offence unto thee.
- Of health. 14 Better is the poor, being sound and strong of
constitution, than a rich man that is afflicted in his body.

3. "Grieveth the enemy." Rather, "his enemy," by making him
envious of his happiness. The LXX. has the verb in the future tense,
"shall provoke to envy," as in the next clause.

7. "Shall bind up his wounds." The LXX. understands this of
the wounds (caused by the folly) of the son ; the Vulgate of the father's
own wounds, which he will have occasion to bind up, on the son's ac-
count. It is not easy to determine the meaning where the text is not
fully ascertained. The next verse appears to favour the latter inter-
pretation,—a spoilt child may kick at a father, and wound him, like
an unbroken horse ; and so do also vv. 9, 11—13, which speak of
"heaviness," "sorrow," and "offence" brought upon the father through
the son's misconduct.

11. "And wink not," &c. This clause, and the first and last clauses
of the next verse, are not in the LXX.

14. In some MSS. the title, "Of Health" (see *Margin*) is prefixed to
the section beginning here and running on to the end of the chapter.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXI.

15 Health and good estate of body are above all gold, and a strong body above infinite wealth.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

16 There is no riches above a sound body, and no joy above the joy of the heart.

17 Death is better than a bitter life or continual sickness.

18 Delicates poured upon a mouth shut up are as messes of meat set upon a grave.

19 ^e What good doeth the offering unto an idol? for neither can it eat nor smell: so is he that is ² persecuted of the Lord.

^e Bel and Dragon 7.

² Or, *afflicted*.

20 He seeth with his eyes and groaneth, ^f as an eunuch that embraceth a virgin and sigheth.

^f ch. 20. 4.

21 ^g Give not over thy mind to heaviness, and afflict not thyself in thine own counsel.

^g Prov. 12. 25. & 15. 13. & 17. 22.

22 The gladness of the heart is the life of man, and the ³ joyfulness of a man prolongeth his days.

³ Or, *exultation*.

23 Love thine own soul, and comfort thy heart, remove sorrow far from thee: ^h for sorrow hath killed many, and there is no profit therein.

^h 2 Cor. 7. 10.

24 Envy and wrath shorten the life, and carefulness bringeth age before the time.

25 ⁴ A cheerful and good heart will have a care of his meat and diet.

⁴ Or, *A noble*.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1 Of the desire of riches. 12 Of moderation and excess in eating, or drinking wine.

WATCHING for ^a riches consumeth the flesh, and the care thereof driveth away sleep.

^a 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.

18. "Upon a mouth shut up;" i.e. by sickness, when all appetite is lost, and the most delicate food has become distasteful.

19. "So is he that is persecuted;" or, "afflicted," as in the *Margin*. That is, He is no more able than the idol to enjoy what is set before him.

21. "In thine own counsel;" i.e. by anxiety about the matters which occupy thy thoughts. Compare St. Matt. vi. 25—34. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7.

25. This may mean, that a man who is of a cheerful heart, and wishes to continue so, will take proper care as to what he eats and drinks; but the text is too uncertain to afford any sure interpretation.

CHAPTER XXXI.

In this and five following chapters there is great diversity of arrangement between the several Greek copies and the Latin and Eastern Versions. At chap. xxxvii. they agree again, and proceed regularly to the end of the book.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

2 Watching care will not let a man slumber, as a sore disease breaketh sleep.

3 The rich hath great labour in gathering riches together; and when he resteth, he is filled with his delicates.

4 The poor laboureth in his poor estate; and when he leaveth off, he is still needy.

5 He that loveth gold shall not be justified, and he that followeth corruption shall have enough thereof.

^b ch. 8. 2.

6 ^b Gold hath been the ruin of many, and their destruction was present.

7 It is a stumblingblock unto them that sacrifice unto it, and every fool shall be taken therewith.

• Luke 6. 24.

8 ^c Blessed is the rich that is found without blemish, and hath not gone after gold.

9 Who is he? and we will call him blessed: for wonderful things hath he done among his people.

10 Who hath been tried thereby, and found perfect? then let him glory. Who might offend, and hath not offended? or done evil, and hath not done it?

^d Ps. 141. 4.
Prov. 23. 1,
2, 3.
ch. 37. 23.

11 His goods shall be established, and the congregation shall declare his alms.

² Gr. open not thy throat upon it.

12 If thou sit at a bountiful table, ^{d2} be not greedy upon it, and say not, There is much meat on it.

• Matt. 6. 23. & 20. 15.

13 Remember that ^e a wicked eye is an evil thing: and what is created more wicked than an eye? therefore it weepeth ³ upon every occasion.

³ Or, before every thing that is presented.

3. "And when he resteth;" i.e. when he ceaseth to acquire wealth, having gotten enough, he gives himself up to self-enjoyment. See St. Luke xii. 19.

5. "He that loveth gold," &c. See Prov. xxviii. 20. 1 Tim. vi. 10.

"And he that followeth corruption," &c. This is probably only an extension of the sense of the foregoing clause, "He that followeth corrupt" means to enlarge his possessions;" though it may refer also to the sensualist. See Gal. vi. 8.

6. "Their destruction was present." LXX., "was before their face."

8. "Hath not gone after gold." Set his heart upon it, with that covetousness, which is idolatry.

10. "Who might offend... or done evil," &c. This refers to offences and evil doings, such as fraud and extortion in pursuit of wealth.

13. "A wicked eye." See above, xiv. 8—10; and below, "a good eye," xxxv. 8.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXI.

14 Stretch not thine hand whithersoever it looketh, and thrust it not with him into the dish. Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

15 Judge of thy neighbour by thyself: and be discreet in every point.

16 Eat, as it becometh a man, those things which are set before thee; and devour not, lest thou be hated.

17 Leave off first for manners' sake; ^fand be not ^{ch. 37. 29.} unsatiable, lest thou offend.

18 When thou sittest among many, reach not thine hand out first of all.

19 A very little is sufficient for a man well nurtured, ²and he fetcheth not his wind short upon his bed. ² Or, and
lieth not
puffing and
blowing.

20 Sound sleep cometh of moderate eating: he riseth early, and his wits are with him: but the pain of watching, and choler, and pangs of the belly, are with an unsatiable man.

21 And if thou hast been forced to eat, arise, go forth, vomit, and thou shalt have rest.

22 My son, hear me, and despise me not, and at the last thou shalt find as I told thee: in all thy works be quick, so shall there no sickness come unto thee.

23 ^gWhoso is liberal of his meat, men shall speak ^{g Prov. 22. 9.} well of him; and the report of his good housekeeping will be believed.

24 But against him that is a niggard of his meat the whole city shall murmur; and the testimonies of his niggardness shall not be doubted of.

25 Shew not thy ^hvaliantness in wine; ⁱfor wine ^h Is. 5. 22.
ⁱ Judith 13.
2, 8. hath destroyed many.

26 The furnace proveth the edge by dipping: so doth wine the hearts of the proud by drunkenness.

27 ^kWine is as good as life to a man, if it be ^k Ps. 104. 15.
Prov. 31. 6, 7

22. "In all thy works be quick;" i.e. be not slothful, but zealous, earnest, active. This seems to refer to bodily activity and diligence, as means of preserving health.

26. "The furnace proveth the edge," &c. As fire proves the temper of the blade, and the goodness of the steel is shown by the way in which it bears the heat when it is "dipped" or thrust into the furnace, so doth wine discover the evil that is in the hearts of the proud, when they have drunk to excess.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

drunk moderately : what life is then to a man that is without wine ? for it was made to make men glad.

28 Wine measurably drunk and in season bringeth gladness of the heart, and cheerfulness of the mind :

29 but wine drunken with excess maketh bitterness of the mind, with brawling and quarrelling.

30 Drunkenness increaseth the rage of a fool till he offend : it diminisheth strength, and maketh wounds.

31 Rebuke not thy neighbour at the wine, and despise him not in his mirth : give him no despiteful words, and press not upon him with urging him [to drink.]

CHAPTER XXXII.

1 Of his duty that is chief or master in a feast. 14 Of the fear of God. 18 Of counsel. 20 Of a ragged and a smooth way. 23 Trust not to any but to thyself, and to God.

IF thou be made the master [of a feast,] lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest ; take diligent care for them, and so sit down.

2 And when thou hast done all thy office, take thy place, that thou mayest be merry with them, and receive a crown for thy well ordering of the feast.

3 Speak, thou that art the elder, for it becometh thee, but with sound judgment ; and hinder not musick.

^a Eccles. 3. 7.
ch. 20. 7.

4 ^a Pour not out words where there is a musician, and shew not forth wisdom out of time.

5 A concert of musick in a banquet of wine is as a signet of carbuncle set in gold.

6 As a signet of an emerald set in a work of gold, so is the melody of musick with pleasant wine.

7 Speak, young man, if there be need of thee : and yet scarcely when thou art twice asked.

8 Let thy speech be short, comprehending much in few words ; be as one that knoweth and yet holdeth his tongue.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1. "If thou be made the master," &c. So as to preside over the company. It was a custom among the ancients to appoint such a president even in private entertainments.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXII.

9 ^b If thou be among great men, make not thyself equal with them; and when ancient men are in place, use not many words.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

^b Job 32. 6.

10 Before the thunder goeth lightning; and before a shamefaced man shall go favour.

11 Rise up betimes, and be not the last; but get thee home without delay.

12 There take thy pastime, and do what thou wilt: but sin not by proud speech.

13 And for these things bless him that made thee, and hath replenished thee with his good things.

14 Whoso feareth the Lord will receive his discipline; and they that seek him early shall find favour.

15 He that seeketh the law shall be filled therewith: but the hypocrite will be offended thereat.

16 They that fear the Lord shall find judgment, and shall kindle justice as a light.

17 A sinful man will not be reproved, but findeth an excuse according to his will.

18 A man of counsel will be considerate; but a strange and proud man is not daunted with fear, even when of himself he hath done without counsel.

19 Do nothing without advice; and when thou hast once done, repent not.

20 Go not in a way wherein thou mayest fall, and stumble not among the stones.

11. "Rise up betimes," &c.; i.e. from the entertainment.

12. "There," &c.; i.e. at home, use some diversion, or moderate exercise to secure digestion; but be not disputatious or quarrelsome with thy family, which would be a proof of excess.

18. "A strange and proud man," &c.; i.e. a man, who in his pride makes himself *strange* and distant and haughty towards others. But the word is sometimes used generally for "sinner" (see xxi. 25, in the LXX.; and xlv. 18.), from the notion which the Jews entertained, that all who were "strangers" to them were "sinners of the Gentiles."

"He hath done." He hath acted.

19. "Repent not;" i.e. be not changeable. See Num. xxiii. 19. Jer. iv. 28. Do not be hasty to adopt any course of conduct; but when you have made up your mind after due deliberation, adhere to your purpose.

20. "Stumble not," &c. Go not among the stones, or, if thou must go among them,—i.e. into dangerous and difficult undertakings,—be doubly cautious lest they cause thee to stumble.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXIII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

21 Be not confident in a plain way.

22 And beware of thine own children.

23 In every good work trust thy own soul; for this is the keeping of the commandments.

24 He that believeth in the Lord taketh heed to the commandment; and he that trusteth in him

² Or, *shall not be hurt.* ² shall fare never the worse.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1 *The safety of him that feareth the Lord.* 2 *The wise and the foolish.* 7 *Times and seasons are of God.* 10 *Men are in his hands as clay in the hands of the potter.* 18 *Chiefly regard thyself.* 24 *Of servants.*

^a Prov. 12. 21.

¹ Pct. 3. 13.

^b 2 Pet. 2. 9.

^a **T**HERE shall no evil happen unto him that feareth the Lord; ^b but in temptation even again he will deliver him.

2 A wise man hateth not the law; but he that is an hypocrite therein is as a ship in a storm.

3 A man of understanding trusteth in the law; and the law is faithful unto him, ³ as an oracle.

³ Or, *as the asking of Urin.*

4 Prepare what to say, and so thou shalt be heard: and bind up instruction, and then make answer.

⁴ Gr. *bowels.*

^c ch. 21. 11.

5 The ⁴ heart of the ^c foolish is like a cartwheel; and his thoughts are like a rolling axletree.

6 A stallion horse is as a mocking friend, he neigheth under every one that sitteth upon him.

21. "Be not confident in a plain way;" i.e. do not presume so as to be careless, in a matter which may seem to be plain and easy; for such confidence often leads to failure. The next verse seems to extend the caution to persons,—and especially to our children,—towards whom we are apt to be least upon our guard. On the other hand (ver. 23.), a manly confidence and reliance upon ourselves, so long as we are careful to do only what is right, is highly laudable (compare xxxiii. 20.); and is indeed what God expects and requires of every man, subject only (ver. 24.) to trust and dependence on the Divine aid. The subject runs on into the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

2. "As a ship in a storm." He is tossed to and fro, and constantly in danger of being cast away.

4. "Bind up instruction," &c. Have it prepared and fastened up, as in a bundle, ready for use.

5. "Like a cartwheel." Continually turning round.

6. "A mocking friend;" i.e. a friend upon whom no dependence is to be placed, being equally ready to adapt himself to any one whom it may be his interest to please.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXIII.

7 Why doth one day excel another, when as all the light of every day in the year is of the sun?

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

8 By the knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished: and he altered seasons and feasts.

9 Some of them hath he made high days, and hallowed *them*, and some of them hath he ²made ordinary days.

² Or, *ordained for the number of days.*

10 And all men are from the ground, and ^dAdam was created of earth.

^d Gen. 1. 27. & 2. 7.

11 In much knowledge the Lord hath divided them, and made their ways diverse.

12 Some of them hath he blessed and exalted, and some of them hath he sanctified, and set near himself: but some of them hath he cursed and brought low, and turned out of their ³places.

³ Or, *standings.*

13 ^eAs the clay is in the potter's hand, to fashion it at his pleasure: so man is in the hand of him that made him, to render to them as liketh him best.

^e Is. 45. 9. & 64. 8. Jer. 18. 6. Wisd. 15. 7, 8. Rom. 9. 20, 21.

14 Good is set against evil, and life against death: so is the godly against the sinner, and the sinner against the godly.

15 So look upon all the works of the most High; and ^fthere are two and two, one against another.

^f ch. 42. 24.

16 I awaked up last of all, as one that ⁴gathereth after the grapegatherers: by the blessing of the Lord I profited, and filled my winepress like a gatherer of grapes.

⁴ Or, *gleaneth.*

17 ^gConsider that I laboured not for myself only, but for all them that seek learning.

^g ch. 24. 34.

7. "When as." An archaism. See above, *First Prologue*; St. Matt. i. 18; and compare "what time as," in Ps. lxxxi. 7; cv. 13, Prayer-Book Version; and "while as," Heb. xi. 8; and above, xxxiii. 7.

8. "By the knowledge;" i.e. the will and appointment.

"He altered;" i.e. He ordained the law whereby certain days became special seasons and festivals.

11 "Hath divided them;" i.e. hath distinguished them (see ver. 8.); hath given to different men different dispositions and different stations in life.

16. Here the writer introduces himself, in order to recommend the weighty sentiments which he has just delivered. They are not merely the fruit of his own observation; but as one, awakened to the knowledge of them by the teaching of others who went before, he had gathered them up and preserved them for the instruction of those who should come after.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

18 Hear me, O ye great men of the people, and hearken with your ears, ye rulers of the congregation.

19 Give not thy son and wife, thy brother and friend, power over thee while thou livest, and give not thy goods to another: lest it repent thee, and thou intreat for the same again.

20 As long as thou livest and hast breath in thee,
² give not thyself over to any.

³ Or. *look to their hands.* 21 For better it is that thy children should seek to thee, than that thou shouldest ³ stand to their courtesy.

22 In all thy works keep to thyself the preeminence; leave not a stain in thine honour.

23 At the time when thou shalt end thy days, and finish thy life, distribute thine inheritance.

Of servants. 24 Fodder, a wand, and burdens, *are* for the ass; and bread, correction, and work, for a servant.

25 If thou set thy servant to labour, thou shalt find rest: but if thou let him go idle, he shall seek liberty.

26 A yoke and a collar do bow the neck: so are tortures and torments for an evil servant.

27 Send him to labour, that he be not idle; for idleness teacheth much evil.

28 Set him to work, as is fit for him: if he be not obedient, put on more heavy fetters.

29 But be not excessive toward any; and without discretion do nothing.

ⁿ ch. 7. 20. 30 ⁿ If thou have a servant, let him be unto thee as thyself, because thou hast bought him ⁴ with a price.

⁴ Gr. *in blood.*

31 If thou have a servant, entreat him as a brother: for thou hast need of him, as of thine own

22. "Keep to thyself the preeminence." The Vulgate has simply, "Be excellent," i.e. study to excel. Compare the advice given to Diomed by his father Hippolochus (Homer, *Iliad*, vi. 208.); and to Achilles by his father Peleus (*Ibid.*, xi. 783.).

24. In some MSS. the title "Of Servants" (see *Margin*) is prefixed to the section beginning here and continued to the end of the chapter. It is to be borne in mind that the instruction given relates not to domestic servants as known among ourselves, but to slaves, who were the property of their masters. See *Introduction*.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXIV.

soul : if thou entreat him evil, and he run from thee, which way wilt thou go to seek him ?

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1 *Of dreams.* 13 *The praise and blessing of them that fear the Lord.* 18
The offering of the ancient, and prayer of the poor innocent.

THE hopes of a man void of understanding are Of dreams.
vain and false : and dreams lift up fools.

2 Whoso ² regardeth dreams is like him that catch- ² Or, hath his
mind upon.
eth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind.

3 The vision of dreams is the resemblance of one thing to another, even as the ^a likeness of a face to a Prov. 27. 19.
a face.

4 ^b Of an unclean thing what can be cleansed ? b Job 14. 4.
and from that thing which is false what truth can come ?

5 Divinations, and soothsayings, and dreams, are vain : and the heart fancieth, as a woman's heart in travail.

6 If they be not sent from the most High in thy visitation, ³ set not thy heart upon them.

³ Or, regard
them not.

7 For dreams have deceived many, and they have failed that put their trust in them.

8 The law shall be found perfect without lies : and wisdom is perfection to a faithful mouth.

9 A man that hath travelled knoweth many things ; and he that hath much experience will declare wisdom.

10 He that hath no experience knoweth little : but he that hath travelled is full of prudence.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1. In some MSS. the title "Of Dreams" (see *Margin*) is prefixed to the section beginning here and continued to the end of ver. 8.

3. The face represented in a glass is nothing in itself, and so the vision of dreams, though it affords a resemblance of things real, has no more truth or reality in it.

4. "Of an unclean thing," &c.; i.e. of a thing essentially unclean what hope is there that any part can be thoroughly cleansed ? Here dreams, &c., are represented as "unclean;" in the second clause as untrue.

5. "Are vain;" i.e. worthless, false ; a meaning frequent in our old writers. See Ps. iv. 2.

8. "To a faithful mouth;" i.e. when the mouth of a faithful person utters it, then wisdom is seen in its most perfect form.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXIV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

11 When I travelled, I saw many things; and I understand more than I can express.

12 I was oftentimes in danger of death: yet I was delivered because of these things.

13 The spirit of those that fear the Lord shall live; for their hope is in him that saveth them.

14 Whoso feareth the Lord shall not fear nor be afraid; for he is his hope.

15 Blessed is the soul of him that feareth the Lord: to whom doth he look? and who is his strength?

^c Ps. 33, 18.
& 34, 15.
^d Ps. 61, 2,
3, 4, & 91.
1, 2, 3, 4.

16 For ^cthe eyes of the Lord are upon them that love him, ^dhe is their mighty protection and strong stay, a defence from heat, and a cover from the sun at noon, a preservation from stumbling, and an help from falling.

17 He raiseth up the soul, and lighteneth the eyes: he giveth health, life, and blessing.

^e Prov. 21, 27.

² Or, the
mockeries.

18 ^eHe that sacrificeth of a thing wrongfully gotten, his offering is ridiculous; and ²the gifts of unjust men are not accepted.

^f Prov. 15, 8.

19 ^fThe most High is not pleased with the offerings of the wicked; neither is he pacified for sin by the multitude of sacrifices.

20 Whoso bringeth an offering of the goods of the poor doeth as one that killeth the son before his father's eyes.

21 The bread of the needy is their life: he that defraudeth him thereof is a man of blood.

^g Lev. 19, 13.
Deut. 24, 14,
15.
ch. 7, 20.

22 He that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him; and he that ^gdefraudeth the labourer of his hire is a bloodshedder.

12. "Because of these things;" i.e. by means of the prudence and experience I had acquired.

14. The fear of the Lord is the only sure remedy against all other fear. See Ps. cxii. 1, 7.

15. "To whom doth he look" for help? To Him that is Almighty.

18. "And the gifts," &c. The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading.

20. "Doeth as one," &c.; i.e. God being the Protector and Father of the poor, he who robs them of their goods, and so may be said to take away their life, is as one who, &c. See the two next verses.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXV.

23 When one buildeth, and another pulleth down, Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.
what profit have they then but labour?

24 When one prayeth, and another curseth, whose voice will the Lord hear?

25 ^h He that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing? ^h Num. 19.
11, 12.

26 ⁱ So is it with a man that fasteth for his sins, and goeth again, and doeth the same: who will hear his prayer? or what doth his humbling profit him? ⁱ 2 Pet. 2. 20,
&c.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1 Sacrifices pleasing to God. 14 The prayer of the fatherless, of the widow, and of the humble in spirit. 20 Acceptable mercy.

HE ^a that keepeth the law bringeth offerings enough: he that taketh heed to the commandment offereth a peace offering. ^a 1 Sam. 15.
22.
Jer. 7, 3, 5, 6, 7.
Hos. 6, 6.
Mic. 6 4, 7, 8.
Mark 12. 33.

2 He that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour; and he that giveth alms sacrificeth praise.

3 ^b To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord; and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation. ^b Dan. 4. 27.

4 ^c Thou shalt not appear empty before the Lord. ^c Ex. 23. 15.
Deut. 16. 16.

5 For all these things [are to be done] because of the commandment.

6 The offering of the righteous maketh the altar fat, and the sweet savour thereof is before the most High.

7 The sacrifice of a just man is acceptable, and the memorial thereof shall never be forgotten.

8 ^d Give the Lord his honour with a good eye, and diminish not the firstfruits of thine hands. ^d Prov. 3. 9.

9 ^e In all thy gifts shew a cheerful countenance, and ² dedicate thy tithes with gladness. ^e 2 Cor. 9. 7.
² Or,
set apart.

10 ^f Give unto the most High according as he ^f Tobit 4. 8.

CHAPTER XXXV.

6. This and the following verse are quoted in the Second Book of Homilies in proof of the doctrine, that "to give alms, and to succour the poor and needy, is a very acceptable thing, and an high sacrifice to God, wherein He greatly delights" (*Sermon of Alms-Deeds*, Part I.).

8. "With a good eye." Freely and cheerfully, without grudging or covetousness. See above, xxxi. 13.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXV.

Before
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g Prov. 19. 17.
2 Cor. 9. 8

² Or,
*Diminish
nothing
of thy
offerings.*

^h Lev. 22.
20, 21, 22.
Deut. 15. 21.
Mal. 1. 8,
13, 14.

ⁱ Deut. 10. 17.
2 Chr. 19. 7.
Job 34. 19.
Wisd. 6. 7.
Acts 10. 34.
Rom. 2. 11.
Gal. 2. 6.
Eph. 6. 9.
Col. 3. 25.
1 Pet. 1. 17.

^k Ex. 22. 23,
27.

hath enriched thee; and as thou hast gotten, give with a cheerful eye.

11 ^g For the Lord recompenseth, and will give thee seven times as much.

12 ² Do not think to corrupt with gifts; ^h for such he will not receive: and trust not to unrighteous sacrifices; for the Lord is judge, and with him is ⁱ no respect of persons.

13 He will not accept any person against a poor man, but ^k will hear the prayer of the oppressed.

14 He will not despise the supplication of the fatherless; nor the widow, when she poureth out her complaint.

15 Do not the tears run down the widow's cheeks? and is not her cry against him that causeth them to fall?

16 He that serveth the Lord shall be accepted with favour, and his prayer shall reach unto the clouds.

17 The prayer of the humble pierceth the clouds: and till it come nigh, he will not be comforted; and will not depart, till the most High shall behold to judge righteously, and execute judgment.

^l 2 Pet. 3. 9.

18 ¹ For the Lord will not be slack, neither will the Mighty be patient toward them, till he have smitten in sunder the loins of the unmerciful, and repayed vengeance to the heathen; till he have taken away the multitude of the ³ proud, and broken the sceptre of the unrighteous;

³ Or, *cruel
oppressors.*

^m Rom. 2. 6.

19 till he have ^m rendered to every man according to his deeds, and to the works of men according to their devices; till he have judged the cause of his people, and made them to rejoice in his mercy.

⁴ Gr. *fair.*

20 Mercy is ⁴ seasonable in the time of affliction, as clouds of rain in the time of drought.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1 *A prayer for the church against the enemies thereof.* 13 *A good heart and a froward.* 21 *Of a good wife.*

17. "Till it come nigh;" i.e. to the throne of grace, so as to attain its object, he will not cease from his importunity. See St. Luke xviii. 7.

18. "Be patient toward them;" i.e. the unmerciful. He will not long restrain Himself from punishing them.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXVI.

HAVE mercy upon us, O Lord God of all, and behold us :

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

2 and send thy fear upon all the nations that seek not after thee.

3 ^a Lift up thy hand ² against the strange nations, and let them see thy power. ^a Jer. 10. 25.
² Or, upon.

4 As thou wast ^b sanctified in us before them : so be thou magnified among them before us. ^b Ezek. 20. 41.
& 28. 25.
& 36. 23,
& 39. 27.

5 And ^c let them know thee, as we have known thee, that there is no God but only thou, O God. ^c 1 Kin. 8. 43, 60.

6 Shew new signs, and make other strange wonders: glorify thy hand and thy right arm, that they may set forth thy wondrous works.

7 Raise up indignation, and ^d pour out wrath : ^d Ps. 79. 6. take away the adversary, and destroy the enemy.

8 Make the time short, remember the ³ covenant, ³ Gr. *oath*. and let them declare thy wonderful works.

9 Let him that escapeth be consumed by the rage of the fire ; and let them perish that oppress the people.

10 Smite in sunder the heads of the rulers of the heathen, that say, There is none other but we.

11 ^e Gather all the tribes of Jacob together, and ^e Jer. 31. 10. inherit thou them, as from the beginning.

12 O Lord, ^f have mercy upon the people that is called by thy name, and upon Israel, ^g whom thou hast named thy firstborn. ^f Dan. 9. 18, 19.
^g Ex. 4. 22.

13 O be merciful unto Jerusalem, thy holy city, ^h the place of thy rest. ^h 2 Chr. 6. 41.
Ps. 132. 14.

14 Fill Sion ⁴ with thine unspeakable oracles, and thy people with thy glory. ⁴ Or, that it may magnify thine oracles.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1—18. The writer, towards the end of the foregoing chapter (vv. 14—17.), having spoken of the efficacy of humble prayer, here proceeds to offer up a supplication in behalf of his fellow-countrymen, now brought low through the oppression of their heathen conquerors.

4. "Before them;" i.e. in their sight.

"Before us." In our sight.

10. This appears to refer to the Kings of Syria and Egypt; and more particularly, perhaps, to Antiochus Epiphanes, whose history, as recorded in the Books of Maccabees, shows him in the character here described.

14. "With thine unspeakable oracles." This reading is from the

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXVI.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

² Or,
prophecies.

³ Or,
suppliants.

¹ Num. 6. 23.

¹ 1 Kin. 8. 60.

15 Give testimony unto those that thou hast possessed from the beginning, and raise up ² prophets that have been in thy name.

16 Reward them that wait for thee, and let thy prophets be found faithful.

17 O Lord, hear the prayer of thy ³ servants, according to the ¹ blessing of Aaron over thy people, ^k that all they which dwell upon the earth may know that thou art the Lord, the eternal God.

18 The belly devoureth all meats, yet is one meat better than another.

¹ Job 34. 3.

19 ¹ As the palate tasteth divers kinds of venison : so doth an heart of understanding false speeches.

20 A froward heart causeth heaviness : but a man of experience will recompense him.

21 A woman will receive every man, yet is one daughter better than another.

22 The beauty of a woman cheereth the countenance, and a man loveth nothing better.

⁴ Or, *common.*

23 If there be kindness, meekness, and comfort, in her tongue, then is not her husband like ⁴ other men.

¹ Or, *to thrive.*

^m Gen. 2. 18.

24 He that getteth a wife beginneth ⁵ a possession, ^m a help like unto himself, and a pillar of rest.

25 Where no hedge is, there the possession is spoiled : and he that hath no wife will wander up and down mourning.

Vulgate. The *Margin* gives the Complutensian text. A third reading, of high MSS. authority, is, "with virtuous discourse," or, "discourse "concerning virtue" (see Field's edition of the LXX., p. 204.).

17. "Of thy servants." The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading.

20. "A froward heart;" i.e. a person who is perverse and ungovernable "causeth heaviness," or grief, to those who come in contact with him ; but a man of prudence and experience will beware of his designs, and bring him to punishment, according to his deserts.

21. The sense appears to be, that every man may hope for success in his addresses to a woman ; but a wise man will know that one woman, or "one daughter" among several in the same family, is superior to another, and will act accordingly.

25. "Will wander up and down mourning." And meanwhile, his domestic affairs, being neglected through want of a wife to superintend them, will suffer waste, like a field which has no hedge to protect it.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXVII.

26 Who will trust a thief well appointed, that skippeth from city to city? so [who will believe] a man that hath no house, and lodgeth wheresoever the night taketh him?

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1 *How to know friends and counsellors.* 12 *The discretion and wisdom of a godly man blesseth him.* 27 *Learn to refrain thine appetite.*

EVERY friend saith, I am his friend also: but there is a friend, which is only a friend in name.

2 Is it not a grief unto death, when a companion and friend is turned to an enemy?

3 O wicked imagination, whence camest thou in to cover the earth with deceit?

4 ^a There is a companion, which rejoiceth in the prosperity of a friend, but in the time of trouble will be against him. ^a ch. 6. 10.

5 There is a companion, which helpeth his friend for the belly, and taketh up the buckler ² against the enemy. ² Or, in presence of the enemy.

6 Forget not thy friend in thy mind, and be not unmindful of him in thy riches.

7 Every counsellor extollet counsel; but there is some that counselleth for himself.

8 Beware of a counsellor, and know before ³ what need he hath; for he will counsel for himself; lest he cast the lot upon thee, ³ Or, what use there is of him.

26. "Well appointed." Both the LXX. and Vulgate represent here a man who is lightly dressed, so as to be able to walk more easily from place to place.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

3. "O wicked imagination." This, probably, refers to the fickleness and instability so bitterly denounced in the foregoing verse.

"To cover the earth with deceit." As with a flood.

5. "For the belly;" i.e. for the sake of *belly cheer* (see *Johnson's Dict.*). The sense of the latter clause is uncertain. If the text is to be depended on, it appears to mean, that the boon companion will sometimes go so far as to help a friend by fighting against his enemy.

8. "Lest he cast the lot upon thee." Expositors are at a loss about the sense of this clause. It probably means,—lest he play with thee and thy interests as in a game of chance; or entangle thee in a suit, saying thy cause is good, and then instead of helping to extri-

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXVII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

9 and say unto thee, Thy way is good: and afterward he stand on the other side, to see what shall befall thee.

10 Consult not with one that suspecteth thee: and hide thy counsel from such as envy thee.

11 Neither consult with a woman touching her of whom she is jealous; neither with a coward in matters of war; nor with a merchant concerning exchange; nor with a buyer of selling; nor with an envious man of thankfulness; nor with an unmerciful man touching kindness; nor with the slothful for any work; nor with an hireling for a year of finishing work; nor with an idle servant of much business: hearken not unto these in any matter of counsel.

12 But be continually with a godly man, whom thou knowest to keep the commandments of the Lord, whose mind is according to thy mind, and will sorrow with thee, if thou shalt miscarry.

13 And let the counsel of thine own heart stand: for there is no man more faithful unto thee than it.

14 For a man's mind is sometime wont to tell him more than seven watchmen, that sit above in an high tower.

15 And above all this pray to the most High, that he will direct thy way in truth.

16 Let reason go before every enterprize, and counsel before every action.

17 The countenance is a sign of changing of the heart.

18 Four manner of things appear: good and evil, life and death: but the tongue ruleth over them continually.

19 There is one that is wise and teacheth many, and yet is unprofitable to himself.

20 There is one that sheweth wisdom in words,
² Or, *wisdom*. and is hated: he shall be destitute of all ² food.

cate thee, stand aloof and leave thee to the consequences. Compare Ezek. xxiv. 6. Joel iii. 3. Obad. 11.

13. Compare xxxii. 23.

18. "Ruleth over them." So great is the influence of the tongue, in various ways, that good and evil, life and death depend upon it.

20. "He shall be destitute," &c. See the *Margin*, which repre-

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXVIII.

21 For grace is not given him from the Lord ;
because he is deprived of all wisdom.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

22 Another is wise to himself ; and the fruits of understanding are commendable in his mouth.

23 A wise man instructeth his people ; and the fruits of his understanding fail not.

24 A wise man shall be filled with blessing ; and all they that see him shall count him happy.

25 The days of the life of man may be numbered : but the days of Israel are innumerable.

26 ^b A wise man shall inherit ² glory among his people, and his name shall be perpetual.

^b Prov. 3. 35.
² Or, credit.

27 My son, prove thy soul in thy life, and see what is evil for it, and give not that unto it.

28 For all things are not profitable for all men, neither hath every soul pleasure in every thing.

29 ^c Be not unsatiable in any dainty thing, nor too greedy upon meats :

30 for ³ excess of meats bringeth sickness, and surfeiting will turn into choler.

³ Or, variety of meats.

31 By surfeiting have many perished ; but he that taketh heed prolongeth his life.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

¹ Honour due to the physician, and why. ¹⁶ How to weep and mourn for the dead. ²⁴ The wisdom of the learned man, and of the labourer and artificer : with the use of them both.

HONOUR a physician with the honour due unto him for the uses which ye may have of him :
^a for the Lord hath created him.

^a ver. 12.

sents a different Greek reading. The clause is probably an interpolation. Compare the next verse.

25. "The days of Israel," &c. ; i.e. of the true Israelite. See the next verse, which shows that posthumous fame is here intended.

26. "Glory." The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading, meaning "trust," "confidence."

27. From the following verses it would seem that the precept here has reference to the bodily constitution, and perhaps also to the disposition and powers of mind (both of which a man must endeavour to ascertain by experience in life, so as to know what is "evil," or unsuitable, for them), and not to "the soul," in a spiritual sense.

30. "Will turn into choler." Will cause bilious disorder.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1. "Hath created him ;" i.e. hath made him to be what he is, and endowed him with the skill which he possesses.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXVIII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

² Or, a gift.

2 For of the most High cometh healing, and he shall receive ² honour of the king.

3 The skill of the physician shall lift up his head : and in the sight of great men he shall be in admiration.

4 The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth ; and he that is wise will not abhor them.

^b Ex. 15. 25.

5 ^b Was not the water made sweet with wood, that the virtue thereof might be known ?

6 And he hath given men skill, that he might be honoured in his marvellous works.

7 With such doth he heal [men,] and taketh away their pains.

8 Of such doth the apothecary make a confection ; and of his works there is no end ; and from him is peace over all the earth.

^c Is. 38. 2.

9 My son, in thy sickness be not negligent : but ^c pray unto the Lord, and he will make thee whole.

10 Leave off from sin, and order thine hands aright, and cleanse thy heart from all wickedness.

³ Or, as a
dead man.
^d ver. 1.

11 Give a sweet savour, and a memorial of fine flour ; and make a fat offering, ³ as not being.

12 Then give place to the physician, ^d for the Lord hath created him : let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him.

13 There is a time when in their hands there is good success.

14 For they shall also pray unto the Lord, that he would prosper that, which they give for ease and

¹ Or, curing. ⁴ remedy to prolong life.

2. "And he," &c. Rather, "and it;" i.e. the gift of healing, by whomsoever exercised, "shall receive honour." The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading.

5. "Was not the water made sweet," &c.; viz. by Moses at Marah. See the reference in the *Margin*.

7. "With such;" viz. the medicinal herbs mentioned in ver. 4, as growing out of the earth.

8. "And from him is peace;" or ease and remedy. See ver. 14. But the Vulgate renders it, "the peace (or blessing) of God." Compare xxxix. 22.

11. Make the offerings for thy transgressions which the Law requires, and prepare thyself, as though thy last hour was come. And at the same time (ver. 12.), have recourse to the physician, who may still be able to prolong thy life.

15 He that sinneth before his Maker, let him fall into the hand of the physician.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

16 My son, ^elet tears fall down over the dead, and begin to lament, as if thou hadst suffered great harm thyself; and then cover his body according to the custom, and neglect not his burial.

^e ch. 22. 11.
1 Thess. 4.
13.

17 Weep bitterly, and make great moan, and use lamentation, as he is worthy, and that a day or two, lest thou be evil spoken of: and then comfort thyself for thy heaviness.

18 ^fFor of heaviness cometh death, and the heaviness of the ^gheart breaketh strength.

^f ch. 30. 23.
2 Cor. 7. 10.
^g Prov. 15. 13.
& 17. 22.

19 In affliction also sorrow remaineth: and the life of the poor is the curse of the heart.

20 Take no heaviness to heart: drive it away, and remember the last end.

21 Forget it not, for there is no turning again: thou shalt not do him good, but hurt thyself.

22 Remember ²my judgment: for thine also shall be so; yesterday for me, and to day for thee.

² Or,
the sentence
upon him.

23 ^hWhen the dead is at rest, let his remembrance rest; and be comforted for him, when his spirit is departed from him.

^h 2 Sam. 12.
20.

24 The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure: and he that hath little business shall become wise.

25 How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is ³of bullocks?

³ Gr.
of the breed
of bullocks?

15. "Let him fall," &c. Or rather, as in the Vulgate, "he shall fall." The Lord will visit him with sickness and disease, so that he will have occasion for the physician's help.

19. "The life of the poor," &c. Both the LXX. and the Vulgate give quite a different turn to this clause. According to our Version it appears to mean, that a life spent in poverty, which is one kind of "affliction," too often gives occasion to that bitterness of spirit and brooding discontent which is as a curse upon the heart.

21. "Thou shalt not do him," i.e. the dead man, "good," by taking his death too much to heart, and continuing to mourn for him.

22. "Remember my judgment." The sentence of dissolution passed on me. This is supposed to be said by the dead man. But see the *Margin*, which represents a different Greek reading.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

26 He giveth his mind to make furrows; and is diligent to give the kine fodder.

27 So every carpenter and workmaster, that laboureth night and day: and they that cut and grave seals, and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finish a work:

28 the smith also sitting by the anvil, and considering the iron work, the vapour of the fire wasteth his flesh, and he fighteth with the heat of the furnace: the noise of the hammer and the anvil is ever in his ears, and his eyes look still upon the pattern of the thing that he maketh; he setteth his mind to finish his work, and watcheth to polish it perfectly:

ⁱ 29 so doth the potter sitting at his work, and ⁱ turning the wheel about with his feet, who is always carefully set at his work, and maketh all his work by number;

² Or, tempereth it with his feet.

30 he fashioneth the clay with his arm, and ² boweth down his strength before his feet; he applieth himself to lead it over; and he is diligent to make clean the furnace:

31 all these trust to their hands: and every one is wise in his work.

32 Without these cannot a city be inhabited: and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down:

33 they shall not be sought for in publick counsel, nor sit high in the congregation: they shall not sit on the judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment: they cannot declare justice and judgment; and they shall not be found where parables are spoken.

34 But they will maintain the state of the world, and [all] their desire is in the work of their craft.

29. "Maketh all his work by number." The interpretation of this clause is doubtful. It seems to describe the care with which he endeavours to bring his work to perfection, so that, according to the Latin phrase, "omnes habeat numeros;" or it may mean, so that he may fulfil the required tale, or number, of pots.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXIX.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

¹ *A description of him that is truly wise.* ¹² *An exhortation to praise God for his works; which are good to the good, and evil to them that are evil.*

BUT he that giveth his mind to the law of the most High, and is occupied in the meditation thereof, will seek out the wisdom of all the ancient, and be occupied in prophecies.

2 He will keep the sayings of the renowned men: and where subtil parables are, he will be there also.

3 He will seek out the secrets of grave sentences, and be conversant in dark parables.

4 He shall serve among great men, and appear before princes: he will travel through strange countries; for he hath tried the good and the evil among men.

5 He will give his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and will pray before the most High, and will open his mouth in prayer, and make supplication for his sins.

6 When the great Lord will, he shall be filled with the spirit of understanding: he shall pour out wise sentences, and give thanks unto the Lord in his prayer.

7 He shall direct his counsel and knowledge, and in his secrets shall he meditate.

8 He shall shew forth that which he hath learned, and shall glory in the law of the covenant of the Lord.

9 Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out; his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation.

10 ^a Nations shall shew forth his wisdom, and the ^a ch. 44. 15. congregation shall declare his praise.

11 If he die, he shall leave a greater name than a thousand: and if he live, he shall ² increase it.

² Or, gain unto it.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

7. "He shall direct," &c. "He" refers to the same person as in the foregoing verse; but "his," in the next clause, to the counsels of the Lord. But the guidance of the LXX. is indistinct, and the Vulgate refers both to God.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXIX.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

12 Yet have I more to say, which I have thought upon; for I am filled as the moon at the full.

13 Hearken unto me, ye holy children, and bud forth as a rose growing by the ²brook of the field:

² Or, *rivers of water.*

14 and give ye a sweet savour as frankincense, and flourish as a lily, send forth a smell, and sing a song of praise, bless the Lord in all his works.

15 Magnify his name, and shew forth his praise with the songs of your lips, and with harps, and in praising him ye shall say after this manner:

^b Gen. 1. 31.

ver. 33.

Mark 7. 37.

1 Tim. 4. 4.

^c Num. 23.

1^o.

^d Rom. 9. 20.

16 ^b All the works of the Lord are exceeding good, and ^c whatsoever he commandeth shall be *accomplished* in due season.

^e Ps. 33. 6, 7.

& 147. 15, 18.

17 ^d And none may say, What is this? wherefore is that? for at time convenient they shall all be sought out: ^e at his commandment the waters stood as an heap, and at the words of his mouth the receptacles of waters.

^f Ps. 135. 6.

18 ^f At his commandment is done whatsoever pleaseth him; and none can hinder, when he will save.

^g Heb. 4. 13.

19 ^g The works of all flesh are before him, and nothing can be hid from his eyes.

20 He seeth from everlasting to everlasting; and there is nothing wonderful before him.

21 A man need not to say, What is this? wherefore is that? for he hath made all things for their uses.

22 His blessing covered the dry land as a river, and watered it as a flood.

23 As he hath turned the waters into saltness: so shall the heathen inherit his wrath.

^h Hos. 14. 9.

24 ^h As his ways are plain unto the holy; so are they stumblingblocks unto the wicked.

13. "Of the field." The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading.

17. "At his commandment," &c. See the references in the *Margin*; and add Exod. xv. 8. Josh. iii. 16.

20. "Nothing wonderful before him." Whereas to the wisest among men everything in the world, from the least to the greatest, is a cause of wonder.

23. "Turned the waters into saltness." This may refer to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. See Gen. xiv. 3. Deut. iii. 17.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XXXIX.

25 For the good are good things created from the beginning: ¹so evil things for sinners.

26 ^kThe principal things for the whole use of man's life are water, fire, iron, and salt, flour of wheat, honey, milk, and ¹the blood of the grape, and oil, and clothing.

27 ^mAll these things are for good to the godly: so to the sinners they are turned into evil.

28 There be spirits that are created for vengeance, which in their fury lay on sore strokes; in the time of destruction they pour out their force, and appease the wrath of him that made them.

29 ⁿFire, and hail, and famine, and death, all these were created for vengeance;

30 ^oteeth of wild beasts, and scorpions, ^p²serpents, and the sword, punishing the wicked to destruction.

31 ^qThey shall rejoice in his commandment, and they shall be ready upon earth, when need is; and when their time is come, they shall not transgress his word.

32 Therefore from the beginning I was resolved, and thought upon these things, and have left them in writing.

33 ^rAll the works of the Lord are good: and he will give every needful thing in due season.

34 So that a man cannot say, This is worse than that: for in time they shall all be well approved.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

ch. 40. 10.
^k ch. 29. 21.

¹ Gen. 49. 11.
Deut. 32. 14.
ch. 40. 20.
& 50. 15.
^m Rom. 8. 23.
¹ Tim. 4. 4.

ⁿ ch. 40. 9.

^o Deut. 32. 24.
^p Wisd. 16. 5.
² Or, *vipers*.

^q Job 38. 35.
¹ Ps. 148. 8.

^r Gen. 1. 31.
ver. 16.

27. "They are turned into evil;" i.e. through the various ways in which sinners abuse them. Nay, the very life of the wicked, which is supported by these means, serves only to increase their punishment, so long as they continue in their sinfulness.

28. "There be spirits," &c. This may mean either good or evil spirits, whom God employs as instruments of His wrath against sinners: which "wrath" they are said to "appease," when they satisfy the demands of His justice. But some, following Luther and other German authorities, understand it to mean "winds" and storms. See Ps. cxlviii. 8. And this suits better, perhaps, with what follows. The only references to angelic beings, good or bad, in this book, are xlv. 2 (a disputed passage), and xlviii. 21.

30. "And the sword." See Jer. xlvii. 6.

34. "For in time," &c. In due time the uses of them all will be discovered, and their value recognized.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XL.

Before
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35 And therefore praise ye the Lord with the whole heart and mouth, and bless the name of the Lord.

CHAPTER XL.

1 *Many miseries in a man's life.* 12 *The reward of unrighteousness, and the fruit of true dealing.* 17 *A virtuous wife and an honest friend rejoice the heart, but the fear of the Lord is above all.* 28 *A beggar's life is hateful.*

^a Gen. 3. 19.
Eccles. 1. 3.

GREAT ^a travail is created for every man, and an heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things.

2 Their imagination of things to come, and the day of death, [trouble] their thoughts, and [cause] fear of heart;

3 from him that sitteth on a throne of glory, unto him that is humbled in earth and ashes;

² Or, to the porter.

4 from him that weareth purple and a crown, ² unto him that is clothed with a linen frock.

5 Wrath, and envy, trouble, and unquietness, fear of death, and anger, and strife, and in the time of rest upon his bed his night sleep, do change his knowledge.

6 A little or nothing is his rest, and afterward he is in his sleep, as in a day of keeping watch, troubled in the vision of his heart, as if he were escaped out of a battle.

7 When all is safe, he awaketh, and marvelleth that the fear was nothing.

CHAPTER XL.

1. "To the mother of all things." Their mother-earth.

4. Dr. Scrivener has pointed out (*Introd.*, p. xxxvii.) that there is no apparent reason why the words in Italics should be so printed.

5. "His night sleep." We find the expression "night-watches," for "watches in the night," more than once in the Psalms, but this is the only place where "night-sleep" occurs in the Bible. The translation has an awkward effect also in other respects. In the original edition, 1611, there is a comma after "bed," but not after "sleep;" and neither in the LXX. nor in the Vulgate is the following verb in the plural.

"Do change his knowledge;" i.e. disturb and agitate, and so produce continual variation in his mind, the seat of his understanding and knowledge.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XL.

8 [Such things happen] unto all flesh, both man and beast, and that is sevenfold more upon sinners. Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

9 ^b Death, and bloodshed, strife, and sword, calamities, famine, tribulation, and the scourge; ^b ch. 39. 25,
29, 30.

10 these things are created for the wicked, and for their sakes came the ^c flood. ^c Gen. 6. 13.
& 7. 11.

11 ^d All things that are of the earth shall turn to the earth again: and that which is of the ^e waters doth return into the sea. ^d Gen. 3. 19.
ch. 41. 10.
^e Eccles. 1. 7.

12 All ² bribery and injustice shall be blotted out: ² Gr. *bribes*. but true dealing shall endure for ever.

13 The goods of the unjust shall be dried up like a river, and shall vanish with noise, like a great thunder in rain.

14 While he openeth his hand he shall rejoice: so shall transgressors come to nought.

15 The children of the ungodly shall not bring forth many branches: but are as unclean roots upon a hard rock.

16 ^f The weed growing upon every water and ^g bank of a river shall be pulled up before all ^g grass. ^f Job 8. 11.
& 18. 16.
^g Gen. 41. 3.

17 Bountifulness is as ³ a most fruitful garden, and mercifulness endureth for ever. ³ Or, a garden that is
blessed: as
ver. 27.

18 To labour, and ^h to be content with that a man hath, is a sweet life: but he that findeth a treasure is above them both. ^h Phil. 4. 11.
ⁱ 1 Tim. 6. 6.

8. "And beast." A strong testimony to the powers of instinct in the brute creation.

"And that is sevenfold more," &c. This again is awkward and ungrammatical, though the meaning is obvious. All are liable to these troublesome imaginations, but sinners are liable to them seven times more than others.

12. "Shall be blotted out." Though they may appear to succeed for a time, in the end they shall meet with their deserts,—they shall come to destruction. See Gen. viii. 4, and *Margin*.

13. "Like a river." See Job vi. 15.

14. The former clause is generally supposed to refer to the man who is liberal and charitable; but there is so little congruity in the verse, as a whole, that the genuineness of the text may be doubted. Some supply "the godly man," in anticipation of ver. 17.

16. See the references in the *Margin*. The comparison with the wicked, which is here left to be understood, is supplied in Job viii. 13; xviii. 5, 16.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XL

Before
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19 Children and the building of a city continue a man's name: but a blameless wife is counted above them both.

20 Wine and musick rejoice the heart: but the love of wisdom is above them both.

21 The pipe and the psaltery make sweet melody: but a pleasant tongue is above them both.

22 Thine eye desireth favour and beauty: but more than both corn while it is green.

23 A friend and companion never meet amiss: but above both is a wife with her husband.

24 Brethren and help are against time of trouble: but alms shall deliver more than them both.

25 Gold and silver make the foot stand sure: but counsel is esteemed above them both.

26 Riches and strength lift up the heart: but the fear of the Lord is above them both: there is no want in the fear of the Lord, and it needeth not to seek help.

¹ ver. 17.

² Or, *a garden that is blessed.*

³ Is. 4. 5.

27 The fear of the Lord is ¹2 a fruitful garden, and ³ covereth him above all glory.

28 My son, lead not a beggar's life; for better it is to die than to beg.

22. "Favour." Here in the sense of *good looks*. "More than both corn while it is green." This translation appears to confine the desire to the greenness of the corn, and to exclude the notion of the harvest which it promises; whereas the meaning of the original combines the two ideas. The green corn is not only an object delightful to the eye, but it suggests the thought of the future crop; and so the sight of it becomes more desirable in proportion as the pleasure is more substantial.

24. "Are against time of trouble." For this use of "against" in reference to time, see Gen. xliii. 25. Exod. vii. 15.

"Alms shall deliver more," &c.; i.e. because God's blessing will go with them. See iii. 30.

26. "Needeth not to seek help;" i.e. from any other quarter.

27. "And covereth him above all glory." The text of this clause is uncertain. The LXX. and the Vulgate have the verb in the plural; and appear to represent the Hebraism, which some understand, e.g., in St. Luke xvi. 9: "they may receive you," for "you may be received." He who hath the fear of the Lord is covered (by angels and men) with exceeding glory. Some interpret, "And He (the Lord) covereth it" (i.e. the fear) with exceeding glory."

28. Regard dependence upon others as the greatest of all evils,—greater even than death itself.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLI.

29 The life of him that dependeth on another man's table is not to be counted for a life; for he polluteth himself with other men's meat: but a wise man well nurtured will beware thereof.

30 Begging is sweet in the mouth of the shameless: but in his belly there shall burn a fire.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

CHAPTER XLI.

1 The remembrance of death. 3 Death is not to be feared. 5 The ungodly shall be accursed. 11 Of an evil and a good name. 14 Wisdom is to be uttered. 16 Of what things we should be ashamed.

O DEATH, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things: yea, unto him that is yet able to receive meat!

2 O death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy, and unto him whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age, and ²is vexed with all things, and to him that despaireth, and hath lost patience!

² Or, to whom every thing is troublesome.

3 Fear not the sentence of death, remember them that have been before thee, and that come after; for this is the sentence of the Lord over all flesh.

4 And why art thou against the pleasure of the most High? there is no inquisition in the grave,

29. See above, xxix. 22—28. "Polluteth himself." Maketh himself contemptible.

30. "But in his belly," &c. It is difficult to determine the meaning of this clause. Probably we are to understand that the man who depends upon begging for his subsistence, will often be reduced to the fiery pangs of extreme hunger. Some interpret: The beggar may use sweet, flattering words to gain his end; but within he is tormented with a bitter, angry sense of his miserable condition.

CHAPTER XLI.

1. "Yet able to receive," &c., and enjoy the food he takes.

4. "Against the pleasure," &c.; i.e. against that which it hath pleased God to ordain, as "the sentence over all flesh," from which there is no exemption. Nor need we be uneasy at the prospect even of an early death; for there will be no enquiry hereafter into the length of our days, but only how we have spent the time allotted to us; though the mind of the writer stops short here of this last consideration. Compare *Introduction*; and ix. 12, *Note*.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLI.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

whether thou have lived ten, or an hundred, or a thousand years.

5 The children of sinners are abominable children, and they that are conversant in the dwelling of the ungodly.

6 The inheritance of sinners' children shall perish, and their posterity shall have a perpetual reproach.

7 The children will complain of an ungodly father, because they shall be reproached for his sake.

8 Woe be unto you, ungodly men, which have forsaken the law of the most high God! for if ye increase, it shall be to your destruction:

9 and if ye be born, ye shall be born to a curse: and if ye die, a curse shall be your portion.

* ch. 40. 11.

10 ^aAll that are of the earth shall turn to earth again: so the ungodly shall go from a curse to destruction.

11 The mourning of men is about their bodies: but an ill name of sinners shall be blotted out.

† Prov. 22. 1.

12 Have regard to thy name; for ^bthat shall continue with thee above a thousand great treasures of gold.

13 A good life hath but few days: but a good name endureth for ever.

14 My children, keep discipline in peace: for

8. "For if ye increase," &c. This clause is not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

9. "And if ye be born," &c. Compare Wisd. xii. 10, 11. On the difficult questions raised by the visitation of the sins of fathers upon the children, under the Law, see Mozley's *Lectures on the Old Testament*, Lect. V.

10. "So the ungodly shall go," &c. Then curse them, and wish for their destruction. There is, apparently, no reference to their final doom.

11. "The mourning of men," &c. There is little reason to mourn, as men are wont to do, over the body when it dies, for this is inevitable; what we ought to mourn over is the "ill name," which, if we become sinners, we shall bring upon ourselves. We cannot prolong our lives, but we can prolong our good or our evil name. Compare Prov. x. 7.

14. "Keep discipline in peace." The connection of this clause with what follows is not obvious. Luther, Grotius, and others, understand "peace" to mean a state of prosperity, in which there is most occasion for prudence and self-control. But perhaps "discipline in peace" is here used to express that *practical wisdom* from above, which "is first pure, then peaceable." See James iii. 17. And, if

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLI.

^c wisdom that is hid, and a treasure that is not seen, what profit is in them both?

Before
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15 ^d A man that hideth his foolishness is better than a man that hideth his wisdom.

^c ch. 20. 30.
^d ch. 20. 31.

16 Therefore be shamefaced according to my word: for it is not good to retain all shamefacedness; neither is it altogether approved in every thing.

17 Be ashamed of whoredom before father and mother: and of a lie before a prince and a mighty man;

18 of an offence before a judge and ruler; of iniquity before a congregation and people; of unjust dealing before thy partner and friend;

19 and of theft in regard of the place where thou sojournest, and in regard of the truth of God and his covenant; and to lean with thine elbow upon the meat; and of scorning to give and take;

20 and of silence before them that salute thee; and to look upon an harlot;

so, "keep" is emphatical; viz. so as to have it always in sight, and ready for use.

16. "According to my word." He had already said (see ver. 14.) that wisdom was not to be hid, through any feeling of false modesty; and he now goes on to show more fully (to the end of the chapter) in what true shamefacedness consists. He mentions no less than eighteen instances, of various kinds and different degrees of faultiness in this respect; some being actually sinful, others of lesser moment, including offences against good manners.

17. The things here mentioned are sins, and as such we ought always to be ashamed of them; but their shamefulness may be aggravated by the circumstances under which they are committed. "Before." The Greek word does not necessarily mean "in the presence of," but rather, "in regard of," as it is translated in ver. 19. It supposes that the sins will come to the knowledge of the parties mentioned, and will give them more than ordinary distress, both on other accounts, and as showing scandalous disregard for their feelings and authority.

19. "And of scorning," &c. The word thus translated properly means "contemptuous, or abusive treatment," but sometimes "deceit, "fraud." And the latter may be the sense here: "and of cheating "as to giving and receiving," i.e. in matters of bargain; though this, perhaps, comes too near to the "unjust dealing," mentioned in the previous verse. Compare xlii. 7. And therefore it is better to understand, with some, "of being blamed in regard to giving and taking," i.e. giving too little, and taking too much; in one word, for niggardliness.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 210.
e Matt. 5. 28.

21 and to turn away thy face from thy kinsman ;
or to take away a portion or a gift ; or ^e to gaze
upon another man's wife ;

22 or to be overbusy with his maid, and come
not near her bed ; or of upbraiding speeches before
friends ; and ^f after thou hast given, upbraid not ;

^f ch. 20. 15.
^f ch. 19. 7. 23 or of ^g iterating and speaking again that
which thou hast heard ; and of revealing of
secrets.

24 So shalt thou be truly shamefaced, and find
favour before all men.

CHAPTER XLII.

1 Whereof we should not be ashamed. 9 Be careful of thy daughter. 12
Beware of a woman. 15 The works and greatness of God.

a Lev. 19. 15.
Deut. 1. 17.
Prov. 24. 23.
ch. 20. 22.

OF these things be not thou ashamed, and ^a ac-
cept no person to sin thereby :

2 of the law of the most High, and his covenant ;
and of judgment to justify the ungodly ;

² Or, Of
thy partners'
speech.

3 ² of reckoning with thy partners and ³ travel-
lers ; or ⁴ of the gift of the heritage of friends ;

³ Or,
companions.

4 of exactness of balance and weights ; or of getting
much or little ;

⁴ Or, of the
giving.

⁵ Or, with-
out profit.

5 and of merchants' ⁵ indifferent selling ; of much

21. "A portion or a gift;" i.e. which has been allotted or given
to another man.

CHAPTER XLII.

1. "Of these things," which he goes on to specify; as in the
foregoing chapter he had mentioned the things of which it is right
to be ashamed.

"And accept no person," &c. Let no person induce you to think
or act otherwise, and so draw you into sin.

2. "To justify the ungodly." A comma is required after "judgment,"
to bring out the proper sense. "Of judgment;" i.e. of true and right-
eous judgment be not ashamed, so as to alter or retract it, and thereby
acquit the guilty.

3. "Partners" seems to be opposed to "travellers," in the sense
of friends and strangers. Be careful to reckon truly and honestly
with both alike. The second clause refers to the case of one who
has to act as a trustee or executor. See the *Margin*.

4. "Of getting much or little;" i.e. in all matters of gain, whether
great or small. See St. Luke xvi. 10.

5. "And of merchants," &c. This translation is doubtful. Some
MSS. read "different," which makes the sense easier. Be not
ashamed of caution in buying, lest you be imposed upon by mer-

correction of children ; and to make the side of an evil servant to bleed.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

6 Sure keeping is good, where an evil wife is ; and shut up, where many hands are.

7 Deliver all things in number and weight ; and put all in writing that thou ² givest out, or receivest ² Or. *dealest for.*

8 Be not ashamed to ³ inform the unwise and foolish, and the extreme aged ⁴ that contendeth with those that are young : thus shalt thou be truly learned, and approved of all men living. ³ Or, *rebuke.* ⁴ Or, *that is accused of fornication.*

9 The father waketh for the daughter, when no man knoweth ; and the care for her taketh away sleep : when she is young, lest she pass away the flower of her age ; and being married, lest she should be hated :

10 in her virginity, lest she should be defiled and gotten with child in her father's house ; and having an husband, lest she should misbehave herself ; and when she is married, lest she should be barren.

11 ^b Keep a sure watch over a shameless daughter, lest she make thee a laughingstock to thine enemies, and a byword in the city, and a reproach among the people, and make thee ashamed before the multitude. ^b ch. 26. 10.

12 Behold not every body's ^c beauty, and sit not ^c ch. 25. 21. in the midst of women.

13 For from garments cometh a moth, and ^d from ^d Gen. 3. 6. women wickedness.

14 Better is the ⁵ churlishness of a man than a courteous woman, a woman, *I say*, which bringeth shame and reproach. ⁵ Or. *wickedness.*

15 I will now remember the works of the Lord,

chants who vary the prices of their goods. Our Version is probably to be understood of the opposite case : Be not ashamed to act as one of those merchants who sell fairly, and *indifferently*.

"Make the side of an evil servant to bleed." See xxxiii. 26.

6. "Shut up." Keep everything under lock and key.

8. "And the extreme aged," &c. Some Versions render the clause as if it referred to taking the part of the old, when the young despise or contend with them. The marginal variation has scarcely any authority.

15. From this verse to chap. l. 25 the author is engaged in setting forth the glorious works of God, and the praises of the worthies of His chosen people. He begins with the truth enunci-

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

and declare the things that I have seen; In the words of the Lord are his works.

16 The sun that giveth light looketh upon all things, and the work thereof *is* full of the glory of the Lord.

* ch. 43. 27.

17 °The Lord hath not given power to the saints to declare all his marvellous works, which the Almighty Lord firmly settled, that whatsoever is might be established for his glory.

2 Or, the
Highest.

18 He seeketh out the deep, and the heart, and considereth their crafty devices: for ²the Lord knoweth all that may be known, and he beholdeth the signs of the world.

19 He declareth the things that are past, and for to come, and revealeth the steps of hidden things.

† Job 42. 2.
Is. 23. 15.

20 † No thought escapeth him, neither any word is hidden from him.

21 He hath garnished the excellent works of his wisdom, and he is from everlasting to everlasting: unto him may nothing be added, neither can he be diminished, and he hath no need of any counsellor.

22 Oh how desirable are all his works! and that a man may see even to a spark.

23 All these things live and remain for ever for all uses, and they are all obedient.

‡ ch. 33. 15.

24 ‡ All things are double one against another: and he hath made nothing imperfect.

25 One thing establisheth the good of another: and who shall be filled with beholding his glory?

ated by the Psalmist (xxxiii. 9; cxlviii. 5.), that all things were made and are sustained by the word of the Lord. See 2 Esdr. vi. 38.

16. "And the work thereof." Other Versions render this with more propriety, as containing the comparison that as the sun's light illumines all things, so all creation is full of the glory of the Lord.

18. The former part of this verse is probably imperfect. The Vulgate after "heart" supplies "of men."

22. "Even to a spark." There is nothing, however insignificant,—not even a spark,—in which the power and wisdom of the Creator are not seen.

24. "All things are double," &c. It is remarked by Bishop Halifax, in his *Preface to Bishop Butler's Analogy*, that "on this single observation of the Son of Sirach the whole fabric of our Prelate's defence of religion in his *Analogy* is raised" (p. xxix.).

25. "Who shall be filled;" i.e. satisfied.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

¹ *The works of God in heaven, and in earth, and in the sea, are exceeding glorious and wonderful. 29 Yet God himself in his power and wisdom is above all.*

THE pride of the height, the clear firmament, the beauty of heaven, with his glorious shew ;

2 the sun when it appeareth, declaring at his rising a marvellous ² instrument, the work of the most ² Or, vessel. High :

3 at noon it parcheth the country, and who can abide the burning heat thereof?

4 A man blowing a furnace is in works of heat, but the sun burneth the mountains three times more; breathing out fiery vapours, and sending forth bright beams, it dimmeth the eyes.

5 Great is the Lord that made it ; and at his commandment ³ it runneth hastily.

6 ^a He made the moon also to serve in her season for a declaration of times, and a sign of the world.

7 ^b From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection.

8 The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven ;

³ Or, he stayeth his course.

^a Gen. 1. 14, 16.

¹ s. 104. 19.

^b Ex. 12. 2.

CHAPTER XLIII.

1, 2. It is impossible to determine the construction of this and the following verse. In the LXX. and in the Vulgate there is a full stop at the end of both. Some interpreters connect the first verse with the last of the preceding chapter, which the Greek will admit of. But the second verse requires a finite verb, instead of the participle "declaring." Some render them thus: "The pride of the height is the glittering firmament, the frame of the heaven a spectacle of splendour. The sun when it appeareth glorifieth Him; "at its rising a marvellous form, a work of the most High."

5. The marginal reading is from the Complutensian text, but has no other authority.

7. "In her perfection;" i.e. when she is at the full.

8. "Being an instrument of the armies above;" i.e. of the heavenly hosts. It is difficult to determine the sense of these words. Grotius understands them to mean, "Being an instrument on high for camps or armies;" and Polybius has shown (Lib. ix. 15.) that a knowledge of the moon's variations was considered necessary for a general, as indicating the times at which it would be best for an army to march, &c. Other interpreters have proposed to alter the text.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

9 the beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord.

10 At the commandment of the Holy One they will stand in their order, and never faint in their watches.

^c Gen. 9. 13.

11 ^c Look upon the rainbow, and praise him that made it; very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof.

12 It compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle, and the ^d hands of the most High have bended it.

^d Is. 40. 12, &c.

13 By his commandment he maketh the snow to fall apace, and sendeth swiftly the lightnings of his judgment.

^e Deut. 28. 12.

Job 38. 22.

Ps. 135. 7.

Jer. 10. 13.

& 51. 16.

14 Through this ^e the treasures are opened: and clouds fly forth as fowls.

15 By his great power he maketh the clouds firm, and the hailstones are broken small.

16 At his sight the mountains are shaken, and at his will the south wind bloweth.

² Or, to
groan as a
woman in
her travail.

17 The noise of the thunder maketh the earth ² to tremble: so doth the northern storm and the whirlwind: as birds flying he scattereth the snow, and the falling down thereof is as the lighting of grasshoppers:

18 The eye marvelleth at the beauty of the whiteness thereof, and the heart is astonished at the raining of it.

³ Or, it is as
the point of
sharp stakes.

19 The hoarfrost also as salt he poureth on the earth, and being congealed, ³ it lieth on the top of sharp stakes.

20 When the cold north wind bloweth, and the water is congealed into ice, it abideth upon every gathering together of water, and clotheth the water as with a breastplate.

21 It devoureth the mountains, and burneth the wilderness, and consumeth the grass as fire.

14. "Through this;" i.e. His commandment. See the reference in the *Margin*.

17. "As the lighting of grasshoppers." Rather, of a flight of locusts.

19. "It lieth," &c. But see the reading given in the *Margin*.

21. "It devoureth the mountains." By destroying all their produce.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLIV.

22 A present remedy of all is a mist *coming speedily*: a dew coming ² after heat refresheth. Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

23 By his counsel he appeaseth the deep, and ² Or, upon the heat. planteth islands therein.

24 ^f They that sail on the sea tell of the danger thereof; and when we hear it with our ears, we marvel thereat. ^f Ps. 107. 23,
24.

25 ^s For therein be strange and wondrous works, variety of all kinds of beasts and whales created. ^s Ps. 104.
25, 26.

26 By him the end of them hath prosperous success, and ^h by his word all things consist. ^h Col. 1. 17.

27 We may speak much, and ⁱ yet come short; ⁱ wherefore in sum, he is all. ⁱ ch. 42. 17.

28 How shall we be able to magnify him? for he is great above all his works.

29 ^k The Lord is terrible and very great, and marvellous is his power. ^k Ps. 96. 4.
& 147. 5.

30 When ye glorify the Lord, exalt him as much as ye can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when ye exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary; for ye can never go far enough.

31 ⁱ Who hath seen him, that he might tell us? and who can magnify him as he is? ⁱ Ps. 106. 2.
John 1. 18.
& 5. 37.
& 6. 46.

32 There are yet hid greater things than these be, for we have seen but a few of his works.

33 For the Lord hath made all things; and to the godly hath he given wisdom.

CHAPTER XLIV.

¹ The praise of certain holy men: 16 of Enoch, 17 Noah, 19 Abraham, 22 Isaac, 23 and Jacob.

LET us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. The praise of
the fathers.

2 The Lord hath wrought great glory by them through his great power from the beginning.

3 Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men

26. "The end of them," &c. Various interpretations have been suggested of this clause; but in the uncertainty of the text they carry little weight.

CHAPTER XLIV.

1. This chapter in the LXX. has the title, "Hymn of the Fathers;" i.e. in honour of them. See *Margin*.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies :

4 leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning meet for the people, wise and eloquent in their instructions :

² Or, *duties*. ² verses in writing :

6 rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations :

7 all these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times.

8 There be of them that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be reported.

^a Gen. 7. 22. ^a And some there be, which have no memorial ; ^a who are perished, as though they had never been ; and are become as though they had never been born ; and their children after them.

10 But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten.

11 With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance, and their children are within the covenant.

³ Or, *after them*. ³ 12 Their seed standeth fast, and their children ³ for their sakes.

13 Their seed shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be blotted out.

14 Their bodies are buried in peace ; but their name liveth for evermore.

^b ch. 39. 10. ^b 15 The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will shew forth their praise.

^c Gen. 5. 24. ^c 16 Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, ^c being an example of repentance to all generations.

^d Gen. 6. 9. ^d 17 Noah was found perfect and righteous ; in ^d & 7. 1. Heb. 11. 7.

4. There is much uncertainty in the text of the two latter clauses of this verse.

6. "Rich men furnished with ability." The LXX. has, "furnished with strength ;" the Vulgate, "men rich in virtue."

10. "But these." Rather "those," before mentioned. It is implied that they whose names have perished were not such.

12. The marginal reading is from the Complutensian text, but has little other authority.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLV.

the time of wrath he was taken in exchange [for the world;] therefore was he left as a remnant unto the earth, when the flood came. Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

18 An ^eeverlasting covenant was made with him, ^e Gen. 9. 11.
that all flesh should perish no more by the flood.

19 Abraham was a ^fgreat father of many people : ^f Gen. 12. 2, 3.
& 15. 5.
& 17. 4.
in glory was there none like unto him ;

20 who kept the law of the most High, and was
in covenant with him : he established the covenant
in ^ghis flesh ; and when he was ^hproved, he was ^g Gen. 17. 10,
11. & 21. 4.
^h Gen. 22. 1.
found faithful.

21 Therefore he assured him by an ⁱoath, that he
would bless the nations in his seed, and that he
would multiply him as the dust of the earth, and
exalt his seed as the stars, and cause them to inherit
from sea to sea, and from the river unto the utmost
part of the land. ⁱ Gen. 22. 16,
17. 18.
Gal. 3. 8.

22 ^kWith Isaac did he establish likewise [for ^k Gen. 26. 3,
4, 5.
Abraham his father's sake] the blessing of all men,
and the covenant,

23 and made it rest upon the head of ⁱJacob. He ⁱ Gen. 27. 28.
& 28. 14.
acknowledged him in his blessing, and gave him an
heritage, and divided his portions ; among the twelve
tribes did he part them.

CHAPTER XLV.

1 The praise of Moses, 6 of Aaron, 23 and of Phinees.

AND he brought out of him a merciful man, which
found favour in the sight of all flesh, even

17. "Taken in exchange." The Vulgate has, "was made a reconciliation." The original Greek word may mean, "was ransomed," or "set free." But the sense appears rather to be, that "through him" "reconciliation entered;" God's wrath became appeased, and the world was repopled by him and his posterity.

21. "Cause them to inherit from sea to sea," &c.; i.e. from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea; or, according to others, from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean; and from the Euphrates to the Deserts of Arabia. But there is evidently a reference to Ps. lxxii. 8, where the same words refer to the universal dominion of the Messiah.

22. Dr. Scrivener has pointed out (*Introd.*, p. xxxvii., *Note*) that the brackets in this verse can only be intended for marks of parenthesis, since no copy omits the enclosed words

CHAPTER XLV.

1. "And he brought out of him;" i.e. from among his descendants.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

- ^a Moses, beloved of God and men, whose memorial is blessed.
- ^a Exod. 11. 3. 2 He made him like to the glorious saints, and magnified him, so that his enemies stood in fear of him.
- ^b Exod. 7, 8, 9, 10, chapters. 3 By his words he caused the wonders to cease, and he made him ^b glorious in the sight of kings, and gave him a commandment for his people, and
- ^c Exod. 34. 6. ^c shewed him part of his glory.
- ^d Num. 12. 3. 4 ^d He sanctified him *in* his faithfulness and meekness, and chose him out of all men.
- ^e Exod. 24. 18. 5 He made him to hear his voice, and ^e brought him into the dark cloud, and ^f gave him commandments before his face, even the law of life and knowledge, that he might teach Jacob his covenants, and Israel his judgments.
- ^g Exod. 4. 14. 6 He ^g exalted Aaron, an holy man like unto him, even his brother, of the tribe of Levi.
- ^h Exod. 28. 1, 2, 4. ^h gave him the priesthood among the people; ² he beautified him with comely ornaments, and clothed him with a robe of glory.
- ² (i.e. he blessed.
- ³ Gr. *vestments*, or. *instruments*. 8 He put upon him perfect glory; and strengthened him with ³ rich garments, with breeches, with a long robe, and the ephod.
- ¹ Exod. 28. 33. 9 And he compassed him with ¹ pomegranates, and with many golden bells round about, that as he
- ^k Exod. 28. 35. went there might be a ^k sound, and a noise made that might be heard in the temple, for a memorial to the children of his people;
- ¹ Exod. 28. 15, 20. 10 with an holy garment, with gold, and blue silk, and purple, the work of the embroiderer, ¹ with a breastplate of judgment, and with Urim and Thummim;
- ^m Exod. 28. 17. 11 with twisted scarlet, the work of the cunning workman, ^m with precious stones graven like seals, and set in gold, the work of the jeweller, with a

2. "Like to the glorious saints." Some understand this of the holy angels (see Dan. iv. 17; but compare above, xxxix. 28.); others either of the angels, or of the priests. See ver. 24.

4. Dr. Scrivener has pointed out (*Introd.*, p. xxxvii.) that there is no apparent reason why the word "in" should be printed in Italics.

8. "Rich garments." Dr. Scrivener has transferred the mark of reference to its proper place, before "garments."

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLV.

writing engraved for a memorial, after the number of the tribes of Israel.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

12 ⁿ He set a crown of gold upon the mitre, wherein was engraved Holiness, an ornament of honour, a costly work, the desires of the eyes, goodly and beautiful.

ⁿ Exod. 28. 36.

13 Before him there were none such, neither did ever any stranger put them on, but only his children and his children's children perpetually.

14 ^o Their sacrifices shall be wholly consumed every day twice continually.

^o Num. 28. 3, 4.

15 ^p Moses consecrated him, and anointed him with holy oil: this was appointed unto him by an everlasting covenant, and to his seed, so long as the heavens should remain, that they should minister unto him, and execute the office of the priesthood, and ^a bless the people in his name.

^p Lev. 8.
^q Num. 6. 23, 24.

16 ^r He chose him out of all men living to offer sacrifices to the Lord, incense, and a sweet savour, for a memorial, to make reconciliation for his people.

^r Num. 17. 5.
¹ Sam. 2. 28.

17 ^s He gave unto him his commandments, and authority in the statutes of judgments, that he should teach Jacob the testimonies, and inform Israel in his laws.

^s Deut. 17. 10, 11. & 21. 5. & 33. 10.
Mal. 2. 7.

18 ^t Strangers conspired together against him, and maligned him in the wilderness, even the men that were of Dathan's and Abiron's side, and the congregation of Core, with fury and wrath.

^t Num. 16. 1.

19 This the Lord saw, and it displeased him, and in his wrathful indignation were they consumed: he did wonders upon them, to consume them with the fiery flame.

20 ^u But he made Aaron more honourable, and gave him an heritage, ^x and divided unto him the firstfruits of the increase; especially he prepared bread in abundance:

^u Num. 17. 8.

^x Num. 18. 12, 13.

13. "Before him there were none such." No such ornaments or vestments made.

15. "Minister unto him;" i.e. unto God, "and bless the people," &c., in the name of God.

18. "Strangers," &c. Proud and wicked men. See above, xxxii. 18.

20. "He prepared bread;" i.e. every kind of food for him and his seed. See the next verse.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLVI.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

y 1 Cor. 9. 13.
z Num. 18. 20.
Deut. 12. 12.
& 18. 1, 2.

a Num. 25.
11, 12, 13.
1 Macc. 2. 54.

b 2 Sam. 7. 12,
&c.

a Num. 27. 18.
Deut. 34. 9.
Josh. 1. 2.
& 12. 7.

21 ^y for they eat of the sacrifices of the Lord, which he gave unto him and his seed.

22 ^z Howbeit in the land of the people he had no inheritance, neither had he any portion among the people: for the Lord himself is his portion and inheritance.

23 ^a The third in glory is Phinees the son of Eleazar, because he had zeal in the fear of the Lord, and stood up with good courage of heart when the people were turned back, and made reconciliation for Israel.

24 Therefore was there a covenant of peace made with him, that he should be the chief of the sanctuary and of his people, and that he and his posterity should have the dignity of the priesthood for ever:

25 ^b according to the covenant made with David son of Jesse, of the tribe of Juda, that the inheritance of the king should be to his posterity alone: so the inheritance of Aaron should also be unto his seed.

26 God give you wisdom in your heart to judge his people in righteousness, that their good things be not abolished, and that their glory may endure for ever.

CHAPTER XLVI.

1 The praise of Joshua, 9 of Caleb, 13 of Samuel.

JESUS ^a the son of Nave was valiant in the wars, and was the successor of Moses in prophecies, who according to his name was made great for the saving of the elect of God, and taking vengeance of

23. "The third in glory;" i.e. probably, in the glory of the high-priesthood, of which he was the third in succession.

"And stood up . . . when the people were turned back." This clause is entirely different in the Vulgate. The LXX. has, "in the 'turning of the people;" which appears to mean that, when the people turned and fell away from God, he remained firm and courageous in His service, and by his zeal "made reconciliation" for them.

26. "God give you wisdom," &c. In concluding his commemoration of Aaron and his seed, the writer offers up a prayer in behalf of those of his posterity who were then living.

CHAPTER XLVI.

1. "Jesus the son of Nave" (i.e. Joshua the son of Nun) . . . "according to his name was made great for the saving," &c. The name meaning in its original form, Oshea, *Saviour*; and as extended to Jehoshua, *Jehovah-Saviour*. See Num. xiii. 16.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLVI.

the enemies that rose up against them, that he might set Israel in their inheritance.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

2 How great glory gat he, when he did lift up his hands, and stretched out his sword against the cities!

3 Who before him so stood to it? for the Lord himself brought his enemies unto him.

4 ^b Did not the sun go back by his means? and was not one day as long as two? ^b Josh. 10. 12, 13, 14.

5 He called upon the most high Lord, when the enemies pressed upon him on every side; and the great Lord heard him.

6 ^c And with hailstones of mighty power he made the battle to fall violently upon the nations, and in the descent [of Beth-horon] he destroyed them that resisted, that the nations might know all their strength, because he fought in the sight of the Lord, and he followed the Mighty One. ^c Josh. 10. 11.

7 ^d In the time of Moses also he did a work of mercy, he and Caleb the son of Jephunne, in that they withstood the congregation, and withheld the people from sin, and appeased the wicked murmuring. ^d Num. 14. 6.
¹ Macc. 2. 55, 56.

8 ^e And of six hundred thousand people on foot, they two were preserved to bring them into the heritage, even unto the land that floweth with milk and honey. ^e Num. 26. 65.
Deut. 1. 35, 36.

9 ^f The Lord gave strength also unto Caleb, which remained with him unto his old age: so that he entered upon the high places of the land, and his seed obtained it for an heritage: ^f Num. 14. 38.
Josh. 14. 11.

10 that all the children of Israel might see that it is good to ^g follow the Lord. ^g Josh. 14. 8, 9.

3. "The Lord himself brought his enemies unto him." The text of this clause is very uncertain; various interpretations have been suggested, but none of much probability. We may be content to suppose that the sense which our translation suggests may be allowed to stand. By bringing in Joshua to possess their land, the Lord provoked his enemies to come out against him, but only to their own destruction.

6. "That the nations might know all their strength." The Vulgate has, "his strength," i.e. the strength of Joshua, which consisted in the Divine help. If "their strength" is to stand, it is to be understood of the forces of the Israelites generally.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLVI.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

h ch. 49, 10.

i 1 Sam. 10. 1.
& 16. 13.

k 1 Sam. 3. 19,
20.

l 1 Sam. 7. 9,
10.

m 1 Sam. 12.
3.

n 1 Sam. 28.
18, 19.

11 And concerning the judges, every one by name, whose heart went not a whoring, nor departed from the Lord, let their memory be blessed.

12 Let their bones ^h flourish out of their place, and let the name of them that were honoured be continued upon their children.

13 ⁱ Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, beloved of his Lord, established a kingdom, and anointed princes over his people.

14 By the law of the Lord he judged the congregation, and the Lord had respect unto Jacob.

15 ^k By his faithfulness he was found a true prophet, and by his word he was known to be faithful in vision.

16 He called upon the mighty Lord, when his enemies pressed upon him on every side, when he offered the ^l sucking lamb.

17 And the Lord thundered from heaven, and with a great noise made his voice to be heard.

18 And he destroyed the rulers of the Tyrians, and all the princes of the Philistines.

19 And before his long sleep he made ^m protestations in the sight of the Lord and his anointed, I have not taken any man's goods, so much as a shoe: and no man did accuse him.

20 And after his death ⁿ he prophesied, and shewed the king his end, and lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy, to blot out the wickedness of the people.

CHAPTER XLVII.

1 *The praise of Nathan, 2 of David, 12 of Solomon his glory, and infirmities. 23 Of his end and punishment.*

12. "Flourish out of their place;" i.e. the place of their burial (see the references in the *Margin*, and St. Matt. xxviii. 6.): an idea naturally suggested by the Eastern practice,—which is now spreading also over the West,—of giving to burial places the appearance of gardens, and of using gardens for that purpose. See 2 Kin. xxi. 18, 26. St. John xix. 41.

20. "In prophecy, to blot out," &c.; i.e. so as "to blot out," to put a stop to, by prophecy delivered under such memorable circumstances, "the wickedness of the people," and so bring them to repentance and amendment of life.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLVII.

AND after him rose up ^a Nathan to prophesy in the time of David.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

2 As is the fat taken away from the peace offering, so was David chosen out of the children of Israel.

^a 2 Sam. 7. 2,
3. & 12. 1.
1 Chr. 17. 1.

3 ² He played with ^b lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs.

² Or, *He smote lions.*
^b 1 Sam. 17. 34.

4 ^o Slew he not a giant, when he was yet but young? and did he not take away reproach from the people, when he lifted up his hand with the stone in the sling, and beat down the boasting of Goliath?

^c 1 Sam. 17. 49, 50, 51.

5 For he called upon the most high Lord; and he gave him strength in his right hand to slay that mighty warrior, and set up the horn of his people.

6 So the people honoured him with ^d ten thousands, and praised him in the blessings of the Lord, in that he gave him a crown of glory.

^d 1 Sam. 18. 7.

7 For ^e he destroyed the enemies on every side, and ³ brought to nought the Philistines his adversaries, and brake their horn in sunder unto this day.

^e 2 Sam. 5. 7.
& 8. 1, &c.
³ Or, *contemned.*

8 In all his works he praised the Holy One most high with words of glory; with his whole heart he sung songs, and loved him that made him.

9 ^f He set singers also before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs.

^f 1 Chron. 16. 4.

10 He beautified their feasts, and set in order the solemn times ⁴ until the end, that they might praise his holy name, and that the temple might sound from morning.

⁴ Or, *perfectly.*

11 ^g The Lord took away his sins, and exalted his

^g 2 Sam. 12. 13.

CHAPTER XLVII.

2. "As is the fat," &c. The fat of the peace-offering was set apart for the altar, as being the best part of the victim.

3. "He played with," &c. The *Margin* represents a different Greek reading.

6. There is much uncertainty in the text of this verse; but our translators have given, perhaps, the most probable interpretation. "And praised him," &c., as one blessed of the Lord, "in that He gave him," &c.

9. "And daily sing praises," &c. This clause is not in the LXX.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

² Or, *of a kingdom.*

^h 1 Kin. 4. 21,
24, 25.
& 5. 4, 5.

ⁱ 1 Kin. 4. 29,
30.

^k 1 Kin. 4. 34.
& 10. 1.

^l 1 Kin. 4.
31, 32.

^m 1 Kin. 10.
22, 27.

ⁿ 1 Kin. 11.
1, &c.
³ Or, *in.*

^o 1 Kin. 12.
15, 16, 17, 20.

^r 2 Sam. 7. 15.
Ps. 89. 33.

^q 1 Kin. 11. 43.

horn for ever: he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne ² of glory in Israel.

12 After him rose up a wise son, and for his sake he dwelt at large.

13 ^h Solomon reigned in a peaceable time, and was honoured; for God made all quiet round about him, that he might build an house in his name, and prepare his sanctuary for ever.

14 ⁱ How wise wast thou in thy youth, and, as a flood, filled with understanding!

15 Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou filledst it with dark parables.

16 ^k Thy name went far unto the islands; and for thy peace thou wast beloved.

17 ^l The countries marvelled at thee for thy songs, and proverbs, and parables, and interpretations.

18 By the name of the Lord God, which is called the Lord God of Israel, thou didst ^m gather gold as tin, and didst multiply silver as lead.

19 ⁿ Thou didst bow thy loins unto women, and ³ by thy body thou wast brought into subjection.

20 Thou didst stain thy honour, and pollute thy seed: so that thou broughtest wrath upon thy children, and wast grieved for thy folly.

21 ^o So the kingdom was divided, and out of Ephraim ruled a rebellious kingdom.

22 ^p But the Lord will never leave off his mercy, neither shall any of his works perish, neither will he abolish the posterity of his elect, and the seed of him that loveth him he will not take away: wherefore he gave a remnant unto Jacob, and out of him a root unto David.

23 Thus rested Solomon with his fathers, ^q and of his seed he left behind him Roboam, even the foolishness of the people, and one that had no under-

11. "He gave him a covenant of kings." See 2 Sam. vii. 12. 1 Kin. vii. 25. Ps. cxxxii. 11, 12. Dr. Scrivener has pointed out that the marginal reference belongs to "kings," not to "glory."

12. "He dwelt at large." His kingdom was extended, and maintained in peace, for his father David's sake.

21. "Out of Ephraim," &c. Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim (1 Kin. xi. 26.), and Samaria, the capital city of the kingdom of Israel, was in that tribe.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLVIII.

standing, who ^r turned away the people through his counsel. There was also Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who ^s caused Israel to sin, and shewed Ephraim the way of sin :

24 and their sins were multiplied exceedingly, that ^t they were driven out of the land.

25 For they sought out all wickedness, till the vengeance came upon them.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

^r 1 Kin. 12.
10, 11, 13,
14.
^s 1 Kin. 12.
28, 30.
^t 2 Kin. 17. 6,
13.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

1 The praise of Elias, 12 of Eliseus, 17 and of Ezekias.

THEN stood up ^a Elias the prophet as fire, and his ^a 1 Kin. 17. 1.
word burned like a lamp.

2 ^b He brought a sore famine upon them, and by ^b James 5. 17.
his zeal he diminished their number.

3 By the word of the Lord he ² shut up the ² Or, *made*
heaven, ^c and also three times brought down fire. *heaven to*
hold up.

4 O Elias, how wast thou honoured in thy won- ^c 1 Kin. 18.
drous deeds! and who may glory like unto thee! ^{38. 2 Kin.}
1. 10, 12.

5 ^d who didst raise up a dead man from death, ^d 1 Kin. 17.
and his soul from the ³ place of the dead, by the ^{21, 22.}
word of the most High : ³ Or, *grave.*

6 ^e who broughtest kings to destruction, and ^e 2 Kin. 1. 16.
honourable men from their ² bed : ⁴ Or, *seat.*

7 who heardest the rebuke of the Lord in Sinai, ^f 1 Kin. 19.
^f and in Horeb the judgment of vengeance : ^{8, &c.}

8 ^g who anointedst kings to take revenge, and ^g 1 Kin. 19.
prophets to succeed after ⁵ him : ^{15, 16.}

9 ^h who wast taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and ⁵ Or, *thee.*
in a chariot of fiery horses : ^h 2 Kin. 2.
⁶ Or, *written of.*

10 who wast ⁶ ordained ⁴ for reproofs in their ⁱ Mal. 4. 5, 6.
Luke 1. 17.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

6. "Who broughtest kings to destruction." Not literally, but by foretelling their deaths, as in the cases of Ahab, Jezebel, Ahaziah, Joram, &c. Compare below, xlix. 7. For other examples of this mode of speech, see Gen. xxvii. 37; xli. 13. Jer. i. 10; xviii. 7, 9. Ezek. xliii. 3.

"From their bed." See the marginal reference. Ahaziah on his bed was told that he should die, and so was "brought" therefrom to "destruction."

8. "After him." So the LXX. The Vulgate has "thee," as in *Margin*.

10. "For reproofs in their times." Rather, in their seasons, i.e. when there was occasion for them, and also a hope that they would produce the necessary reformation.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

² Or,
establish.

³ Or, *were
adorned
with love.*

^k 2 Kin. 2.
11, 15.

¹ 2 Kin. 3. 14.

⁴ Or,
Nothing.

^m 2 Kin. 13.
21.

ⁿ 2 Kin. 18.
11, 12.

^o 2 Chron.
32. 5.

^p 2 Kin. 20.
20.

^q 2 Kin. 18.
13, 17.
18, 36. 1.

^r 2 Kin. 19.
15, 20.

times, to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgment, before it brake forth into fury, and to turn the heart of the father unto the son, and to ² restore the tribes of Jacob.

11 Blessed are they that saw thee, and ³ slept in love; for we shall surely live.

12 ^k Elias it was, who was covered with a whirlwind: and Eliseus was filled with his spirit: whilst he lived, ¹ he was not moved *with the presence* of any prince, neither could any bring him into subjection.

13 ⁴ No word could overcome him; ^m and after his death his body prophesied.

14 He did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous.

15 For all this the people repented not, neither departed they from their sins, ⁿ till they were spoiled and carried out of their land, and were scattered through all the earth: yet there remained a small people, and a ruler in the house of David:

16 of whom some did that which was pleasing to God, and some multiplied sins.

17 ^o Ezekias fortified his city, and ^p brought in water into the midst thereof: he digged the hard rock with iron, and made wells for waters.

18 In his time ^q Sennacherib came up, and sent Rabsaces, and lifted up his hand against Sion, and boasted proudly.

19 Then trembled their hearts and hands, and they were in pain, as women in travail.

20 ^r But they called upon the Lord which is merciful, and stretched out their hands toward him: and

“Restore.” See St. Matt. xvii. 11.

11. There is much uncertainty about the text of this verse, and consequently about its meaning. See *Margin*. The Vulgate gives quite a different turn to the latter clause; and some deny that it has any reference to a future state. Looking to the context, we may suppose, with them, that the writer is to be understood as alluding to the expected return of Elijah (Mal. iv. 5. St. Matt. xvii. 11.), and expressing a strong hope that he himself may be among the blessed ones to live and see that event.

13. “His body prophesied.” This, no doubt, is to be understood of the miracle, the sign of a prophet, which is recorded in 2 Kings (see *Margin*) and in the next verse.

ECCLESIASTICUS, XLIX.

immediately the Holy One heard them out of heaven, and delivered them by the ²ministry of Esay.

21 ^a He smote the host of the Assyrians, and his angel destroyed them.

22 ^t For Ezekias had done the thing that pleased the Lord, and was strong in the ways of David his father, as Esay the prophet, who was great and faithful in his vision, had commanded him.

23 ^u In his time the sun went backward, and he lengthened the king's life.

24 He saw by an excellent spirit what should come to pass at the last, and he comforted them that mourned in Sion.

25 He shewed what should come to pass for ever, and secret things or ever they came.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

² Or, *hand*.
⁸ 2 Kin. 19.
35.
Is. 37. 36.
Tobit 1. 18.
1 Macc. 7. 41.
2 Macc. 8. 19.
^t 2 Kin. 18. 3.

^u 2 Kin. 20.
10, 11.
Is. 38. 8.

CHAPTER XLIX.

¹ *The praise of Josias, 4 of David and Ezekias, 6 of Jeremy, 8 of Ezekiel, 11 Zorobabel, 12 Jesus the son of Josedec, 13 of Neemias, Enoch, Sem, Seth, and Adam.*

THE remembrance of ^a Josias is like the com-
position of the perfume that is made by the
art of the apothecary: it is sweet as honey in all
mouths, and as musick at a banquet of wine.

2 He ³ behaved himself uprightly in the conver-
sion of the people, ^b and took away the abomina-
tions of iniquity.

3 ^c He directed his heart unto the Lord, and in
the time of the ungodly he established the worship
of God.

4 All, except David and Ezekias and Josias, were
defective: for they forsook the law of the most High,
even the kings of Juda failed.

5 ^d Therefore he gave their ⁴ power unto others,
and their glory to a strange nation.

6 ^e They burnt the chosen city of the sanctuary,

^a 2 Kin. 22. 1.
2 Chr. 34. 1.

³ Or,
prospered.
^b 2 Kin. 23.
4, &c.
2 Chr. 34. 3,
33.
^c 2 Kin. 23. 3,
25.

^d 2 Chr. 36.
17.
⁴ Or, *horn*.
^e 2 Kin. 25. 9,
2 Chr. 36. 19.

25. "Or ever." See Ps. xc. 2. Prov. viii. 23. Eccles. xii. 6. Dan. vi. 24. Acts xxiii. 15. The less antiquated form, with the same meaning, "ere ever," occurs above, xxiii. 20.

CHAPTER XLIX.

4. "Were defective." In tolerating idolatrous worship.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

and made the streets desolate, ^{2f} according to the prophecy of Jeremias.

² Or, by the
hand of Je-
remy.

^f Jer. 37. 8.

^g Jer. 38. 6.

^h Jer. 1. 5,
10.

7 For they ^g entreated him evil, who nevertheless was a prophet, ^h sanctified in his mother's womb, that he might root out, and afflict, and destroy; and that he might build up also, and plant.

ⁱ Ezek. 1. 3,
4, 15.

8 ⁱ It was Ezekiel who saw the glorious vision, which was shewed him upon the chariot of the cherubims.

^k Ezek. 13.
11. & 38. 9,
16, 22.

³ Or, did
good.

9 For he ^k made mention of the enemies under the figure of the rain, and ³ directed them that went right.

^l ch. 46. 12.

10 And of the twelve prophets let the memorial be blessed, and ^l let their bones flourish again out of their place: for they comforted Jacob, and delivered them by assured hope.

^m Ezra 3. 2.
Hag. 2. 23.

11 How shall we magnify ^m Zorobabel? even he was as a signet on the right hand:

ⁿ Ezra 3. 2.
Hag. 1. 12
& 2. 2.
Zech. 3. 1.

12 so was ⁿ Jesus the son of Josedec: who in their time builded the house, and set up an holy temple to the Lord, which was prepared for everlasting glory.

^o Neh. 7. 1.

13 And among the elect was Neemias, whose renown is great, ^o who raised up for us the walls that were fallen, and set up the gates and the bars, and raised up our ruins again.

^p Gen. 5. 24.
ch. 44. 16.
Heb. 11. 5.

14 But upon the earth was no man created like ^p Enoch; for he was taken from the earth.

^q Gen. 41. 43.
& 42. 6.
& 45. 8.
& 50. 25.

Ex. 13. 19.

^r Gen. 5. 3.
32. & 11. 10.

15 Neither was there a man born like unto ^q Joseph, a governor of his brethren, a stay of the people, whose bones were regarded of the Lord.

16 ^r Sem and Seth were in great honour among men, and so was Adam above every living thing in the creation.

CHAPTER L.

1 Of Simon the son of Onias. 22 How the people were taught to praise God, and pray. 27 The conclusion.

7. "That he might root out." See above, xlvi. 6.

9. "Directed them." The *Margin* represents a different, but ungrammatical, Greek reading. Dr. Scrivener has pointed out that "unto" should be added after "did good."

11. "Was as a signet." See Jer. xxii. 24.

ECCLESIASTICUS, L.

SIMON the high priest, the son of Onias, who Before
CHRIST
cir. 200. in his life repaired the house again, and in his days fortified the temple :

2 and by him was built from the foundation the double height, the high fortress of the wall about the temple :

3 in his days the ^acistern to receive water, being ^a 1 Kin. 7. 23. in compass as the sea, was covered with plates of brass :

4 he took care of the temple that it should not fall, and fortified the city against besieging :

5 how was he honoured in the midst of the people in his coming out of ²the sanctuary !

6 He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full : ² Gr. the
house of the
veil.

7 as the sun shining upon the temple of the most High, and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds :

8 and as the flower of roses in the spring of the year, as lilies by the rivers of waters, and as the branches of the frankincense tree in the time of summer :

9 as fire and incense in the censer, and as a vessel of beaten gold set with all manner of precious stones :

10 and as a fair olive tree budding forth fruit, and as a cypress tree which groweth up to the clouds.

CHAPTER L.

1. We find mentioned in Jewish history two Simons, sons of Onias, both high priests. See Josephus, *Antiq.* XII. ii. 4. The former, surnamed the Just, who succeeded his father as high priest about 310 B.C., is the one here referred to, according to Prideaux, Vol. II., p. 435. The latter, his grandson, succeeded to the high-priesthood in 217 B.C., and is regarded as the more probable subject of this eulogy by later authorities, who also claim for him the title of "the Just." See Stanley's *Jewish Church*, Vol. III., p. 247, *Note*.

2. This and the two following verses are to be regarded as in a parenthesis, the construction of the first verse being carried on into the fifth.

5. "How was he honoured," &c. See Stanley's *Jewish Church*, III., 249. It is supposed from this graphic description that the writer was a contemporary, and had himself witnessed what he here describes. See *Introduction*. There is nothing in the chronology to forbid this, if we understand him to be speaking of Simon II.

Before
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cir. 20.

11 When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy altar, he made the garment of holiness honourable.

12 When he took the portions out of the priests' hands, he himself stood by the hearth of the altar, compassed with his brethren round about, as a young cedar in Libanus; and as palm trees compassed they him round about.

13 So were all the sons of Aaron in their glory, and the oblations of the Lord in their hands, before all the congregation of Israel.

14 And finishing the service at the altar, that he might adorn the offering of the most high Almighty,

15 he stretched out his hand to the cup, and poured of ^bthe blood of the grape, he poured out at the foot of the altar a sweetsmelling savour unto the most high King of all.

16 Then shouted the sons of Aaron, and ^csounded the ²silver trumpets, and made a great noise to be heard, for a remembrance before the most High.

^b Deut. 32.
14.
ch 39. 26.

^c Num. 10. 8,
10.
² Or, *trumpets beaten forth with the hammer.*

17 Then all the people together hasted, and fell down to the earth upon their faces to worship their Lord God Almighty, the most High.

18 The singers also sang praises with their voices, with great variety of sounds was there made sweet melody.

19 And the people besought the Lord, the most High, by prayer before him that is merciful, till the solemnity of the Lord was ended, and they had finished his service.

20 Then he went down, and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation of the children of Israel, to give the blessing of the Lord with his lips, and to rejoice in his name.

21 And they bowed themselves down to worship the second time, that they might receive a blessing from the most High.

11. See above, xlv. 8—10.

21. See Num. vii. 22—27.

22 Now therefore ^d bless ye the God of all, which only doeth wondrous things every where, which exalteth our days from the womb, and dealeth with us according to his mercy. Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.
a Ps. 72. 18.

23 He grant us joyfulness of heart, and that peace may be in our days in Israel for ever :

24 that he would confirm his mercy with us, and deliver us at his time !

25 There be two manner of nations which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation :

26 they that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and they that dwell among the Philistines, and that foolish people that dwell in Sichem.

27 Jesus the son of Sirach of Jerusalem hath written in this book the instruction of understanding and knowledge, who out of his heart poured forth wisdom.

28 Blessed is he that shall be exercised in these things ; and he that layeth them up in his heart shall become wise.

29 For if he do them, he shall be strong to all things : for the light of the Lord leadeth him, who

22. "Which exalteth our days," &c. Whose providence has preserved us ever since we were born.

25—29. These last five verses form the natural conclusion of the book, and the prayer which occupies the next chapter is wanting in two MSS., whence some have supposed that it may have been added by the translator.

26. In order to remove the difficulty which arises from the virtual identity, in the sense here intended, of Samaria and Sichem, it has been suggested, instead of the former, to read, "the mountain of *Seir*," inhabited by the Idumeans, the posterity of Esau. In the Law the Jews had been forbidden to "abhor an Edomite" (see Deut. xxiii. 7.), but the traditional enmity which nevertheless existed towards them is represented by the Psalmist (Ps. cxxxviii. 7.) ; and in the prophecy of Obadiah it appears to receive the sanction of God Himself, no less than in the case of the Philistines. When the city of Samaria was destroyed, Sichem, or Shechem, became the capital of the Samaritans ; who are said here to be "no nation," because they consisted of the mixture of tribes whom the King of Assyria had transplanted thither (see 2 Kin. xvii. 24.). In the words "that foolish people," there is perhaps an allusion to Moreh = "foolish," the ancient name of Shechem.

27. "Who out of his heart," &c. It is not clear whether these words refer to the father, Sirach, or to the son, Jesus ; nor, again, whether they come from Jesus, the author, or were added by the grandson, the translator. The latter supposition seems more probable.

ECCLESIASTICUS, LI.

Before
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giveth wisdom to the godly. Blessed be the Lord for ever. Amen, Amen.

CHAPTER LI.

A Prayer of Jesus the son of Sirach.

I WILL thank thee, O Lord and King, and praise thee, O God my Saviour: I do give praise unto thy name:

2 for thou art my defender and helper, and hast preserved my body from destruction, and from the snare of the slanderous tongue, and from the lips that forge lies, and hast been mine helper against mine adversaries:

3 and hast delivered me, according to the multitude of thy mercies and greatness of thy name, from ² the teeth of them that were ready to devour me, and out of the hands of such as sought after my life, and from the manifold afflictions which I had;

² Gr. *the gnashing of the teeth.*

4 from the choking of fire on every side, and from the midst of the fire which I kindled not;

5 from the depth of the belly of hell, from an unclean tongue, and from lying words.

6 By an accusation to the king from an unrighteous tongue my soul drew near even unto death, my life was near to the hell beneath.

7 They compassed me on every side, and there was no man to help me: I looked for the succour of men, but there was none.

8 Then thought I upon thy mercy, O Lord, and

29. "Who giveth wisdom," &c. These words, to the end of the verse, are not in the LXX., or in the Vulgate.

CHAPTER LI.

1. The author concludes his work with a prayer or hymn to God, from which we learn several remarkable particulars of his life; how he had been exposed to an unjust accusation, which had brought him into great danger, and had suffered "manifold afflictions," mainly, as it would seem, from the same cause; and how, when he had been in despair of all human aid, he had recourse to prayer, in remembrance of God's mercies, and thereupon was saved from destruction, and delivered from the evil time. He also testifies to the zeal with which, from his early youth, he had sought after wisdom, and to the "good possession," and the "much rest" which he had gotten through that pursuit.

ECCLESIASTICUS, LI.

upon thy acts of old, how thou deliverest such as wait for thee, and savest them out of the hands of the enemies. Before
CHRIST
cir. 200.

9 Then lifted I up my supplication from the earth, and prayed for deliverance from death.

10 I called upon the Lord, the Father of my Lord, that he would not leave me in the days of my trouble, and in the time of the proud, when there was no help.

11 I will praise thy name continually, and will sing praise with thanksgiving; ²and so my prayer was heard: ² Or, because
my prayer.

12 for thou savedst me from destruction, and deliveredst me from the evil time: therefore will I give thanks, and praise thee, and bless thy name, O Lord.

13 When I was yet young, or ever I ³went abroad, ³ Or, went
astray. I desired wisdom openly in my prayer.

14 I prayed for her before the temple, and will seek her out even to the end.

15 Even from the flower till the grape was ripe hath my heart delighted in her: my foot went the right way, from my youth up sought I after her.

16 I bowed down mine ear a little, and received her, and gat much learning.

17 I profited therein, *therefore* will I ascribe the glory unto him that giveth me wisdom.

18 For I purposed to do after her, and earnestly

10. "The Father of my Lord." Bishop Beveridge, in a sermon upon John xiv. 14, regards this expression, and also the use of the words "O God my Saviour" in ver. 1, as a proof that "not only the prophets, but all God's faithful people in those days" (i.e. many years before our Saviour's Incarnation) "believed the Lord, the Almighty God, to be the Father of One who was Himself also *the Lord*, and in a peculiar manner their Lord and Saviour; and that in their prayers they had respect to Him, and prayed in His name; expecting to be heard only upon His account, and for His sake; who was promised by the name of 'the Lord' and 'Messiah the Prince,' Dan. ix. 17, 25" (Vol. III., p. 54.). Compare Ps. ii. 7; cx. 1. Other interpreters, both ancient and modern, concur in the same view; and the suspicion that the words "of my Lord" are a later interpolation by some Christian, has no foundation to rest upon. Others, while they admit this, nevertheless follow Luther, who had translated "my Father and Lord," without any authority from MSS.

Before
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cir. 200.

I followed that which is good; so shall I not be confounded.

19 My soul hath wrestled with her, and in my doings I was exact: I stretched forth my hands to the heaven above, and bewailed my ignorances of her.

² Or, *I got understanding.*

20 ² I directed my soul unto her, and I found her in pureness: I have had my heart joined with her from the beginning, therefore shall I not be forsaken.

³ Or, *bowels.*

21 My ³ heart was troubled in seeking her: therefore have I gotten a good possession.

22 The Lord hath given me a tongue for my reward, and I will praise him therewith.

23 Draw near unto me, ye unlearned, and dwell in the house of learning.

24 Wherefore are ye slow, and what say ye of these things, seeing your souls are very thirsty?

^a Is. 55. 1.

25 I opened my mouth, and said, ^a Buy her for yourselves without money.

^b Deut. 30. 14.

26 Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction: ^b she is hard at hand to find.

^c ch. 6. 19.

27 ^c Behold with your eyes, how that I have had but little labour, and have gotten unto me much rest.

28 Get learning with a great sum of money, and get much gold by her.

20. "I have had my heart joined." Dr. Scrivener has pointed out that the marginal reference belongs to these words, and not to those at the beginning of the verse.

24. The text of the former part of this verse is uncertain. According to the LXX., the first two clauses should be read as one,—“Wherefore are ye deficient in these things?”

28. The sentiment of this verse is not inconsistent with that of ver. 25. In the verse above, the reference in the margin to Is. lv. 1 reminds us that the poor man is at no disadvantage in comparison with the rich, where the purchase of true *wisdom* is concerned, because it depends not upon money, but upon the grace of God, given in answer to our prayers, and on our own exertions and self-discipline. But in the case of those who have wealth, they cannot employ it to better purpose than in acquiring knowledge, which may enable them to increase their possessions, and so to do good upon a wider scale. Compare Prov. iv. 7, 8.

ECCLESIASTICUS, LI.

29 Let your soul rejoice in his mercy, and be not ashamed of his praise. Before
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cir. 200.

30 Work your work betimes, ^d and in his time he will give you your reward. a Rom. 2. 6, 7.

29. The name of God being absent from the text, some prefer to understand what is said in this and the next verse as belonging still to "wisdom" or "learning;" and would change the pronoun "his" into "her," and "he" into "she." Others translate: "Let your soul rejoice in the mercy of the Lord;" the Divine name being, it is thought, naturally to be supplied.

BARUCH.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremy are classified with the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah in the old Greek copies of the Old Testament, the former preceding the Lamentations, and the latter being placed after it, being rather a separate treatise than a chapter of the book which bears the name of Baruch.

In the Vulgate, and in the Sixth Article of the Church of England, the book, including the Epistle, is distinguished as "Baruch the Prophet." But even if it was probable (as some learned authors have maintained) that the book is a genuine work of Baruch the son of Neriah, the disciple and faithful adherent of the Prophet Jeremiah, there would be reason to doubt whether it could be regarded as the work of an inspired prophet. The Jews deny that Baruch attained to the position of a prophet, though he earnestly desired it; inferring this from Jer. xlv. 1—5, where Jeremiah comforts him in his disappointment. It is a question whether the writer of the *Apostolical Constitutions* was correct in his statement that some of the Jews read Baruch, together with the Lamentations, on the Day of Atonement. The author of the *Synopsis of Scripture*, in St. Athanasius' works, classes Baruch amongst the books which were not written by the authors whose names they bear. St. Jerome also had the same opinion of the book. The learned Grotius supposed the book to be the work of some Jew skilled in the Greek language, who composed it according to his own ideas of the things which Baruch might have written on behalf of the captives in Babylon. The book consists partly of the prayers and confessions of the Jewish captives, who humbled themselves before God in their exile, and partly of words of hope and encouragement, and promises of the restoration of Jerusalem. The confessions of the people are chiefly taken from Dan. ix. and Neh. ix.

The portion of the book which has attracted most attention is chap. iii. 35—37. This was frequently quoted by the Fathers as a prediction of the Incarnation, and it is perhaps owing to the importance attached to it that the book obtained the title "Baruch the Prophet."

INTRODUCTION.

“The Epistle of Jeremy” is a lengthy address to the Jews in Babylon on the subject of idols. It is partly founded upon Jer. x. 1—15, and bears no resemblance in style or subject to the five chapters which form the Book of Baruch.

The Syriac treatise, called the “Epistle of Baruch the Scribe,” and addressed to “the nine and a half tribes beyond the Euphrates,” differs widely from the Baruch of the Septuagint and Vulgate. It was written, however, with a similar object,—viz. to give the Jews comfort and encouragement in a time of distress,—and has some points of contact with the Baruch of the Apocrypha. In both there is the confession of sin, and the hope of restoration upon true repentance. But the Greek Baruch dwells upon the hope of temporal relief and deliverance, whilst the Syriac author points rather to the world to come and eternal judgment, and the fiery vengeance which should overtake the enemies of God and His people in a future state. The hiding of the sacred vessels of the Temple, which is ascribed to Jeremiah in 2 Macc. ii. 1—7, is related in the Syriac Baruch as the act of angels sent from heaven to Jerusalem immediately before its capture by the Chaldeans. It is probable that the Greek Baruch is of earlier date, as it adheres more closely to the language of the prophets, dwelling more on God’s promises of temporal relief than on the hope of immortality.

BARUCH, I.

CHAPTER I.

¹ *Baruch wrote a book in Babylon.* ⁵ *The Jews there wept at the reading of it.* ⁷ *They send money and the book to the brethren at Jerusalem.*

^a Jer. 36. 4. **A**^a AND these are the words of the book, which Baruch the son of Nerias, the son of Maasias, the son of Sedecias, the son of Asadiah, the son of Chelcias, wrote in Babylon,

2 in the fifth year, and in the seventh day of the month, what time as the Chaldeans took Jerusalem, and burnt it with fire.

² Or, *Joachim*. 3 And Baruch did read the words of this book in the hearing of Jechonias the son of ² Joachim king of Juda, and in the ears of all the people that came to hear the book,

4 and in the hearing of the nobles, and of the king's sons, and in the hearing of the elders, and of all the people, from the lowest unto the highest,

CHAPTER I.

1. "**Baruch the son of Nerias.**" Baruch, the son of Neriah, who is represented as the author or transcriber of the sayings in this book, was the faithful disciple of the Prophet Jeremiah, and his constant companion until death. When Jeremiah was imprisoned by Jehoiakim, Baruch wrote down his prophecies at his dictation, and then read them in the ears of the people in the house of the Lord (Jer. xxxvi. 4—6.). When the king burned the roll, Baruch wrote the prophecy again, with additions (Jer. xxxvi. 32.). When he was discouraged, Jeremiah comforted him (Jer. xlv. 2—5.). In the fourth year of Zedekiah he went with his brother Seraiah to Babylon, carrying a letter from Jeremiah to Jeconiah and the other captives. This letter contained a prediction of the fall of Babylon, and of the return of the Jews from captivity. It was read to the captives, and then bound to a stone and cast into the river (Jer. li. 59—64.). According to the Book of Baruch, the captives were moved by this letter to make offerings to the Temple, and to send an epistle to their brethren that remained in Jerusalem.

2. "**What time as;**" or, "in the fifth year dating from" the surrender of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, when Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, was carried into captivity (2 Kin. xxiv. 10—16.). The author seems, however, in ii. 2, 3, to have had in his mind the events of the final siege and overthrow of the city and Temple.

3. "**Joachim,**" usually called "Jeconiah," or "Jehoiachin." From 2 Kin. xxv. 27, it appears that he was imprisoned; but this may mean that, as a royal captive, he was kept under some kind of restraint, not in rigorous confinement.

4. "**The king's sons.**" In the third year of Jehoiakim, some of the Jewish princes had been taken as hostages (Dan. i. 1, 3.), and others had shared the captivity of Jeconiah.

BARUCH, I.

even of all them that dwelt at Babylon by the river Sud.

5 Whereupon they wept, fasted, ² and prayed before the Lord. ² Or, and vowed vows.

6 They made also a collection of money according to every man's power :

7 and they sent it to Jerusalem unto ³ Joachim ³ Or, Joachin. the high priest, the son of Chelcias, son of Salom, and to the priests, and to all the people which were found with him at Jerusalem,

8 at the same time when he received ^b the vessels of the house of the Lord, that were carried out of the temple, to return them into the land of Juda, the tenth day of *the month* Sivan, *namely*, silver vessels, which Sedecias the son of Josias king of Juda had made, ^b 2 Kin. 24. 13.
² Chr. 36. 10.

9 after that Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon had carried away Jechonias, and the princes, and the ⁴ captives, and the mighty men, and the people of the land, from Jerusalem, and brought them unto Babylon. ⁴ Or, prisoners.

10 And they said, Behold, we have sent you money to buy you burnt offerings, and sin offerings, and incense, and prepare ye ⁵ manna, and offer upon the altar of the Lord our God ; ⁵ Gr. corruptly for *mincha*, that is, a meat offering.

“Sud,” or “Sura ;” supposed to be a name for the Euphrates.

7. “Joachim . . . the son of Chelcias.” The same name is assigned to the high priest in the Book of Judith (iv. 6 ; xv. 8.). The high priest, at the time of the capture of Jerusalem, is named Seraiah in 2 Kin. xxv. 18. Eliakim, Joachim, and Hilkiah appear to have been names of frequent occurrence in the family of the priests (Is. xxii. 20, &c. 2 Kin. xxii. 8.).

8. “Sivan” was the third month (Esth. viii. 9.), the first month being Abib, or Nisan, and the second being Zif. Sivan corresponded to our May or June.

“Silver vessels.” These may have been redeemed at a price from the Chaldeans, or they were procured as a substitute for the vessels of gold which Nebuchadnezzar had taken.

9. “Jechonias.” His captivity was foretold in Jer. xxii. 24, 25. The account of the fulfilment of this prophecy is given in 2 Chr. xxxvi. 9, 10. The “goodly vessels,” or “vessels of desire,” being taken away by the conquerors, silver vessels were procured in their place. The vessels are described in Ezra i. 7—11 ; v. 14 ; vi. 5.

10. “Prepare ye manna.” The word “manna” here answers to the Hebrew “mincha,” or meat-offering. The meat-offering consisted of fine flour, with oil and frankincense (Lev. ii. 1, 2.). The offerings described here are the same as in Jer. xvii, 26. The Law, in Deut.

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c Ezra 6. 10.
Jer. 29. 7.

11 and ^c pray for the life of Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon, and for the life of Balthasar his son, that their days may be upon earth as the days of heaven :

d Ezek. 31. 6.
Dan. 4. 12,
21.

12 and the Lord will give us strength, and lighten our eyes, and we shall live ^d under the shadow of Nabuchodonosor king of Babylon, and under the shadow of Balthasar his son, and we shall serve them many days, and find favour in their sight.

13 Pray for us also unto the Lord our God, for we have sinned against the Lord our God ; and unto this day the fury of the Lord and his wrath is not turned from us.

14 And ye shall read this book which we have sent unto you, to make confession in the house of the Lord, upon the feasts and solemn days.

e Dan. 9. 7.
ch. 2. 6.
See Neh. 9.
32. &c.

15 And ye shall say, ^e To the Lord our God *belongeth* righteousness, but unto us the confusion

xiv. 24—26, authorised the sending of money, instead of offerings in kind, by those whose abode was at a long distance from the sanctuary.

11. "Pray for the life of Nabuchodonosor." This is taken from Jer. xxix. 7, where the captives are exhorted to seek the peace of Babylon, and to pray for it. The prayers and offerings which were afterwards made at Jerusalem for the kings of Persia, were partly a recognition of the benefits conferred upon the Jewish nation by Cyrus (Ezra vi. 10.).

"Balthasar." One of the sons of Nebuchadnezzar ; perhaps a brother of Evil-merodach, who eventually succeeded him (2 Kin. xxv. 27.).

"The days of heaven." Heaven is the type of tranquillity and permanence. So it was the promise to Israel, that their days should be multiplied, "as the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. xi. 21. Ps. lxxii. 5 ; lxxxix. 29. "The days during which the heavens continue "to be over the earth" (*Targum*).

12. "Lighten our eyes." He will give us comfort or relief in the days of our affliction and adversity. See Is. ix. 2. They were to "live," flourish, and increase in the land of their captivity (Jer. xxix. 4—6.), "under the shadow" or protection of the King of Babylon. See Lam. iv. 20.

13. "Pray for us also." The captives ask for the sympathy of their brethren in their affliction. So in the Syriac Epistle of Baruch, the tribes are exhorted to take comfort in the calamities which they have experienced themselves, and to grieve for the troubles of their brethren.

14. "Solemn days." In the Greek, "days of season," answering to the Hebrew "revolution of days" (1 Sam. i. 20) ; or "days of special observance," as in Hos. ix. 5 ; xii. 9.

15—17. "To the Lord our God," &c. The form of confession is the same as in Neh. ix. 33, 34. Dan. ix. 7, 8. Confession of sin is the giving

BARUCH, I.

of faces, as *it is come to pass* this day, unto them of Juda, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

16 and to our kings, and to our princes, and to our priests, and to our prophets, and to our fathers:

17 for we have ^f sinned before the Lord, f Dan. 9. 5.

18 and disobeyed him, and have not hearkened unto the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the commandments that he gave us openly :

19 since the day that the Lord brought our forefathers out of the land of Egypt, unto this present day, we have been disobedient unto the Lord our God, and we have been negligent in not hearing his voice.

20 ^g Wherefore the evils cleaved unto us, and the g Deut. 28. 15.
Dan. 9. 11. curse, which the Lord appointed by Moses his ser-

of glory to God, acknowledging His justice, and man's guilt; or, as in Ps. cvi. 1, 2, 6, 7, enumerating God's benefits, and the sins by which man has requited evil for good.

"As it is come to pass this day;" or, "unto this day." Though the Divine judgments were of long continuance, yet they are acknowledged to be just.

"For we have sinned." In the Greek, "for the things whereby we have sinned;" that is, shame and confusion of face is ours because of them. The reference is to the disgrace of the captivity, which exposed them to the reproach and contempt of other nations.

18. "Gave us openly." The meaning is, rather, "set before us," as in Dan. ix. 10. They had both disregarded the Law, and the special injunctions which God gave them by the prophets.

19. "Since the day." The public confession of sins usually enumerated the sins of the nation from the time of their redemption from Egypt, their unbelief at the Red Sea, and their idolatry at Sinai (Ps. cvi. 6, 7. Neh. ix. 17, 18. Ezra ix. 7.).

"We have been negligent." Or, we have made light of God's word, set it at nought in our fickleness, waywardness, or levity; trifling with it like children in their sport.

20. "Cleaved unto us." It was the threatening of the Law, in Deut. xxviii. 60, that if the children of Israel would not cleave unto God, the plagues, diseases, and calamities of which they were afraid would "adhere," or "cleave fast" to them, or "lie upon them" (Deut. xxix. 20. See also Jer. xlii. 16.). The words here are nearly the same as in Dan. ix. 11. In the Syriac Epistle of Baruch there is the following expansion of the passage: "Remember that which Moses testified, when he called heaven and earth to witness against you, saying, If ye transgress My Law, ye shall be scattered; but if ye observe it, ye shall be protected. Moreover, he declared to you other things whilst ye were together as twelve tribes in the desert; but these things ye also rejected after his death. But the things which he foretold have now come to pass, for ye have forsaken the Law."

BARUCH, II.

vant at the time that he brought our fathers out of the land of Egypt, to give us a land that floweth with milk and honey, like as *it is to see* this day.

^h Dan. 9. 10. 21 ^h Nevertheless we have not hearkened unto the voice of the Lord our God, according unto all the words of the prophets, whom he sent unto us :

22 but every man followed the imagination of his own wicked heart, to serve strange gods, and to do evil in the sight of the Lord our God.

CHAPTER II.

The prayer and confession which the Jews at Babylon made, and sent in that book unto the brethren in Jerusalem.

^a Dan. 9. 12, ^a **T**HEREFORE the Lord hath made good his word, which he pronounced against us, and against our judges that judged Israel, and against our kings, and against our princes, and against the men of Israel and Juda,

2 to bring upon us great plagues, such as never happened under the whole heaven, as it came to pass in Jerusalem, according to the things that were written in the law of Moses ;

^b Deut. 28. 53. ^b 3 that a man should ^b eat the flesh of his own son, and the flesh of his own daughter.
^{Lam. 2. 20.}
^{& 4. 10.}

4 Moreover he hath delivered them to be in sub-
^c 2 Kin. 21. 2. jection to ^c all the kingdoms that are round about

22. "To serve strange gods." The word denotes "laborious or hard service," such as the labourer performs for the king, in Eccles. v. 9. Such was the service which they must now render to the King of Babylon (ii. 21—24.).

CHAPTER II.

1. "Made good;" that is, "established" or "confirmed" His word, as in Dan. ix. 12, 14. The judgments which He had threatened overtook them, or "took hold" of them (Zech. i. 6.).

2. "Such as never happened." As in Dan. ix. 12, the vengeance upon Jerusalem was as singular and extraordinary as the privileges were which God had bestowed upon her, and her people had despised and neglected. See Lam. i. 12 ; ii. 13.

3. "Of his own son." Such were the horrors of the siege of Samaria, in 2 Kin. vi. 29 ; and they were repeated in the last siege of Jerusalem (Lam. ii. 20 ; iv. 10.). The Law of Moses had forewarned the Israelites that their sins would bring them to this (Lev. xxvi. 29. Deut. xxviii. 53, 57.).

4. "To all the kingdoms." At different times they were made subject to the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Syrians, and Am-

us, to be as ^d a reproach and ^e desolation among all the people round about, where the Lord hath scattered them. ^d Is. 43. 28.
^e Jer. 25. 38.
& 44. 6, 22.

5 Thus we ² ^f were cast down, and not exalted, because we have sinned against the Lord our God, and have not been obedient unto his voice. ² Gr. *were beneath, and not above.*
^f Deut. 28. 43, 44.

6 ^g To the Lord our God *appertaineth* righteousness: but unto us and to our fathers open shame, as *appeareth* this day. ^g ch. 1. 15.

7 ^h For all these plagues are come upon us, which the Lord hath pronounced against us. ^h Dan. 9. 11, 12.
ch. 1. 20.

8 ⁱ Yet have we not prayed before the Lord, that we might turn every one from the imaginations of his wicked heart. ⁱ Dan. 9. 13, &c.

9 Wherefore the Lord watched over us for evil, and the Lord hath brought it upon us: for the Lord is righteous in all his works which he hath commanded us.

10 Yet we have not hearkened unto his voice, to walk in the commandments of the Lord, that he hath set before us.

11 ^k And now, O Lord God of Israel, that hast ^k Dan. 9. 15.

monites. In the reign of Jehoiakim they were invaded by other nations before Nebuchadnezzar subdued them (2 Kin. xxiv. 2.).

“Desolation.” Literally, “an untrodden waste.” The expression may be taken from Jer. xlix. 13. So Samaria was made “a heap of the field,” and Zion was ploughed up (Micah i. 6; iii. 12.).

5. “Cast down, and not exalted.” This is taken from Deut. xxviii. 43: “The stranger that is in thy midst shall ascend above thee higher “and higher, and thou shalt descend lower and lower.”

6. “Open shame;” or, “shame of faces,” as in i. 15. They were degraded in the sight of all the nations, and they attribute this to their own sins, and the sins of their fathers.

8. “That we might turn.” Or, “that He would turn us from our “iniquities, and cause us to understand His truth,” as in Dan. ix. 13. So in Lam. v. 21 the prayer is, “Turn us, O Lord, unto Thee, and we “shall be converted.”

9. “Watched over us for evil;” that is, He has hastened to bring the evil upon us. This was signified, in Jer. i. 11, by the rod of the almond tree, which is the first of all trees to “awake” from the sleep of winter. See also Jer. xxxi. 28; xlv. 27. In the Syriac Epistle, which is addressed to the ten tribes: “Because we have sinned against “Him Who made us, and we have not kept the laws which He commanded us, there has come upon us the calamity that befell you, only “our affliction is much more grievous.” The allusion is to Jer. vii. 14, 15.

BARUCH, II.

brought thy people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and high arm, and with signs, and with wonders, and with great power, and ¹hast gotten thyself a name, as *appeareth* this day:

¹ Neh. 9. 10.

12 O Lord our God, we have sinned, we have done ungodly, we have dealt unrighteously in all thine ordinances.

^m Dan. 9. 16, &c.

ⁿ Jer. 42. 2.

13 ^m Let thy wrath turn from us: for ⁿ we are but a few left among the heathen, where thou hast scattered us.

14 Hear our prayers, O Lord, and our petitions, and deliver us for thine own sake, and give us favour in the sight of them which have led us away:

^o Is. 37. 20.

² Gr. *thy name is called upon Israel.*

^p Dan. 9. 19.

^q Deut. 28. 15.

^r Is. 63. 15.

^r Dan. 9. 18.

^s Ps. 6. 5.

& 115. 17.

^t Is. 38. 14, 19.

^u Ecclus. 17.

27. 28.

^v Gr. *spirit, or, life.*

15 ^o that all the earth may know that thou art the Lord our God, because ^{2p} Israel and his posterity is called by thy name.

16 O Lord, ^q look down from thine holy house, and consider us: ^r bow down thine ear, O Lord, to hear us.

17 Open thine eyes, and behold; ^s for the dead that are in the graves, whose ³ souls are taken from

12. "In all thine ordinances." Or, "against thy righteous laws." The words are nearly the same as those of Dan. ix. 5.

13. "We are but a few," &c. They were diminished by wars and dispersions, and only a small and weak remnant was left. See Is. i. 9; vi. 13. Jer. xlii. 2. Deut. xxviii. 62; and below, ver. 29.

14. "Give us favour." God gave His people some consolations in their exile (Ps. cvi. 46.); as when Daniel and the other princes of Judah were promoted (Dan. i. 9; ii. 49.); and when Cyrus was moved to promote their restoration (Ezra ix. 9.). The petitions which follow are the same as those in Dan. ix. 18, 19.

17. "The dead that are in the graves." If the small remnant of God's people should be cut off, there would be none left to testify to Him upon earth, and to transmit the knowledge of the truth to another generation. Such was the plea of Hezekiah, in Is. xxxviii. 18, 19. The Greek Book of Baruch seems to dwell upon earthly hopes and temporal promises, whilst the Syriac Epistle speaks of the life to come: "If ye consider in your minds that ye suffer these things for your good, that ye be not condemned and punished hereafter, then ye will attain to an everlasting hope." The author of the latter agrees more with the teaching of the Books of Maccabees and Wisdom, whilst the former is nearer to the doctrine of the Son of Sirach (Ecclus. xvii. 27, 28.).

"Whose souls," &c. Literally, "the dead in Hades, whose breath is taken from their inward parts," referring to the breath of speech

BARUCH, II.

their bodies, will give unto the Lord neither praise nor righteousness:

18 but the soul that is greatly vexed, which goeth stooping and feeble, and the eyes that fail, and the hungry soul, will give thee praise and righteousness, O Lord.

19 ^t Therefore we do not make our humble supplication before thee, O Lord our God, for the righteousness of our fathers, and of our kings. ^t Dan. 9. 18.

20 For thou hast sent out thy wrath and indignation upon us, as thou hast spoken by thy servants the prophets, saying,

21 ^u Thus saith the Lord, Bow down your shoulders to serve the king of Babylon: so shall ye remain in the land that I gave unto your fathers. ^u Jer. 27. 11.

22 But if ye will not hear the voice of the Lord, to serve the king of Babylon,

and utterance which declares God's praise, as well as to the breath of life. So "silence" is connected with death, in Ps. xciv. 17; cxv. 17.

18. "The soul that is greatly vexed," &c. These expressions are like those of Hezekiah, in Is. xxxviii. 14, 15: "Mine eyes fail for looking upward: I am oppressed; undertake for me. I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." The prayer of Hezekiah being for the deliverance of his people as well as for himself, it readily adapted itself to the needs of the nation in times of peril and captivity. The Vulgate has: "The soul that is sorrowful for the greatness of the evil she hath done."

"Stooping." Bending, or looking downwards; a token of shame and humiliation. So Ezra ix. 6, "I am ashamed to lift up my face unto Thee" (St. Luke xviii. 13.).

"The hungry soul;" that is, the soul that is chastened by fasting. See Dan. ix. 3. Fasting is "an afflicting of the soul" (Lev. xvi. 29.), by which men judge their sins as worthy of condemnation, and acknowledge that God is just and righteous in afflicting them (*Jer. Taylor*).

19. "Make our humble supplication." Literally, "cast down our misery before Thee," as in the Hebrew of Dan. ix. 18, 20, from which the passage is taken. "To lay down a request" is to present it humbly, as a suppliant.

"The righteousness;" or, "righteous acts." They could not plead that the calamity was undeserved, or that it had come upon them without forewarning.

20—24. "For thou hast sent out thy wrath." These Divine judgments had driven them to make this humble supplication, and had constrained them to make confession of their guilt. The command to serve the King of Babylon was given in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim (*Jer. xxvii. 1—11.*). The prophecy of the ceasing of bridal and other festivities is in *Jer. vii. 34; xvi. 9; xxv. 10.* That of the removal of the bones, in *Jer. viii. 1, 2.*

^x Jer. 7. 34.
& 16. 9.
& 25. 10.

23 ^x I will cause to cease out of the cities of Juda, and from without Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of joy, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: and the whole land shall be desolate of inhabitants.

24 But we would not hearken unto thy voice, to serve the king of Babylon: therefore hast thou made good ^y the words that thou spakest by thy servants the prophets, namely, that the bones of our kings, and the bones of our fathers, should be taken out of their places.

^z Jer. 36. 30.

25 And, lo, ^z they are cast out to the heat of the day, and to the frost of the night, and they died in great miseries by famine, by sword, and by pestilence.

26 And the house which is called by thy name hast thou laid waste, as *it is to be seen* this day, for the wickedness of the house of Israel and the house of Juda.

27 O Lord our God, thou hast dealt with us after all thy goodness, and according to all that great mercy of thine,

25. "They are cast out," &c. The bones of the dead were disinterred, and of the living, some, like Jehoiakim, were slain by the enemy, and their bodies left unburied (Jer. xxxvi. 30.); others went into captivity, and died in a strange land, far from the sepulchres of their fathers.

"And by pestilence." In the Vulgate, "in banishment." But the Greek word means a Divine visitation of judgment, and is put for "plague," or "pestilence," in Jer. xxxii. 24, 36, the passage from which the phrase is derived.

26. "Laid waste;" or, "exposed" it, to be profaned and pillaged by the heathen. The Syriac Epistle of Baruch says on this: "We are now exiled from our land, and Sion is taken away from us, and nothing is left us but the Most High and His Law." But it adds, "The things that we have lost are corruptible; but the things that we shall obtain are incorruptible." The thought of finding consolation for the loss of the sanctuary in the possession of the Law and its Divine Wisdom is common to the two treatises. See below, iv. 2.

27. "Thou hast dealt with us after all thy goodness." Even in bringing these heavy calamities upon them, God had tempered His severity with mercy. So ver. 14, above; and the Syriac Epistle dwells upon the mercy of the Most High, in shortening the days of their affliction, and revealing to His servants the approach of the time when He should visit them with deliverance, and judge their enemies for their impiety and cruelty.

BARUCH, II.

28 as thou spakest by thy servant Moses in the day when thou didst command him to write thy law before the children of Israel, saying,

29 ^aIf ye will not hear my voice, surely ²this very great multitude shall be turned into a small number among the nations, where I will scatter them. ^a Lev. 26. 14, &c. Deut. 28. 15, 62. ² Gr. *this great swarm.*

30 For I knew that they would not hear me, because it is a stiffnecked people: but ^bin the land of their captivities they shall ³remember themselves. ^b Lev. 26. 32, &c. ³ Or, *come to themselves.*

31 ^cand shall know that I am the Lord their God: for ^dI will give them an heart, and ears to hear: ^c Ps. 9. 16. ^d Deut. 30. 6. Jer. 24. 7. & 32. 33.

32 and they shall praise me in the land of their captivity, and think upon my name,

33 and return from their stiff ⁴neck, and from ⁴Gr. *back.* their wicked deeds: for they shall remember the way of their fathers, which sinned before the Lord.

34 ^eAnd I will bring them again into the land which I promised with an oath unto their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and they shall be lords of it: and I will increase them, and they shall not be diminished. ^e Jer. 16. 15.

29. "Multitude." Literally, "swarm," as of bees; or the hum, murmur, or confused noise of a multitude of people. Moses had forewarned them that they should be scattered among the nations, and be diminished in numbers (Deut. iv. 27; xxviii. 62, 64.).

30. "Remember themselves." They should "return to their own heart." So in 1 Kin. viii. 47, the captives are said to "bethink themselves," or "bring back to their heart." The sinner begins to repent when he returns to his heart, or comes to himself (Luke xv. 17.), by calling his own ways to remembrance, "saying, What have I done?" (Jer. viii. 6.).

31. "I will give them an heart." In Deut. xxx. 6, "He will circumcise thine heart;" but in Jer. xxiv. 7, "I will give them an heart to know Me." The effect of their afflictions should be to subdue their stubborn wills, and to bring their hearts to submit to the law of God. They should even praise Him for afflicting them, and perceive His mercy and goodness in the evils which had befallen them. See below, iii. 7; and Jer. xxxiii. 7—9.

33. "Remember the way of their fathers." They would take warning from the consequences of their fathers' sins and rebellion, and avoid their evil ways. Thus Zechariah exhorted the Jews, "Your fathers, where are they?" See Zech. i. 4—6. Ezek. xx. 18. Ps. lxxviii. 8.

BARUCH, III.

^r Jer. 31. 31,
&c. & 32.
38, 40.

^s Lam. 4. 22.

35 And ^rI will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God, and they shall be my people: ^sand I will no more drive my people of Israel out of the land that I have given them.

CHAPTER III.

³ *The rest of their prayer and confession contained in that book, which Baruch writ, and sent to Jerusalem. 30 Wisdom was shewed first to Jacob, and was seen upon the earth.*

O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, the soul in anguish, the troubled spirit, crieth unto thee.

2 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy; for thou art merciful: and have pity upon us, because we have sinned before thee.

^a Ps. 102. 26. 3 For ^athou endurest for ever, and we perish utterly.

4 O Lord Almighty, thou God of Israel, hear now the prayers of the dead Israelites, and of their

35. "An everlasting covenant." When the prophets spoke of an "everlasting covenant," their words pointed to the new and better covenant, established upon better promises, of which Christ was the Mediator. The inheritance of the land of Canaan was, like all other earthly possessions, uncertain and transitory; the only secure title is that which is obtained through Christ to the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, which is reserved in heaven for His people (Is. lv. 3; lxi. 8. Jer. xxxii. 37—41.). This is the truly "everlasting possession," of which the land of promise was the type (Gen. xvii. 8, 19; xlviii. 4. Ps. cv. 10. Ezek. xxxvii. 26. Heb. xiii. 20.).

CHAPTER III.

1. "The troubled spirit;" or, the spirit that is "overwhelmed" with grief, as in Ps. lxi. 2; cxliii. 4. When earthly consolations fail, the soul is driven to God as its only refuge. Compare Tobit iii. 1.

3. "We perish utterly." Vulgate, "Shall we perish everlastingly?" The meaning may be this: "If God is unchangeable and eternal, is it possible that He should cast off for ever and abandon to utter ruin the people with whom He has made an 'everlasting covenant?'" (ii. 35. Ps. lxxvii. 7—10.). Such is the plea in Ps. cii. 24—27. When the hearts of God's servants failed them at the sight of the evil that prevailed in the world, they took refuge in the remembrance of God's unchangeableness, and His omnipotence as the King of kings, "sitting" for ever on His heavenly throne.

4. "The prayers of the dead Israelites." Some interpreters explain this of the prayers of the departed, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, continuing to intercede for their posterity after death, referring to the vision of Onias in 2 Macc. xv. 12—14; also to Gen. iv. 10. Rev. vi. 10, where the souls desire vengeance against those who shed their blood upon the earth. But the opinion of Grotius is more in accord with the general tone of the book: He calls those Israelites "dead," who were

BARUCH, III.

children, which have sinned before thee, and not hearkened unto the voice of thee their God: for the which cause these plagues cleave unto us.

5 Remember not the iniquities of our forefathers: but think upon thy power and thy name now at this time.

6 For thou art the Lord our God, and thee, O Lord, will we praise.

7 And for this cause thou hast put thy fear in our hearts, to the intent that we should call upon thy name, and praise thee in our captivity: for ^b we have called to mind all the iniquity of our ^b Deut. 30. 1. forefathers, that sinned before thee.

8 Behold, we are yet this day in our captivity, where thou hast scattered us, for a reproach and a curse, and to be subject to payments, according to all the iniquities of our fathers, which departed from the Lord our God.

led into captivity (compare vv. 10, 11, below); for they were like branches severed from the trunk, without strength or vitality.

5. "Remember not the iniquities of our forefathers." This petition, which the Church has introduced into her services, is not so much a prayer for the departed, as a deprecation of the evil consequences of the sins of former generations; for though God has said that every soul must bear its own iniquity (Jer. xxxi. 29, 30. Ezek. xviii. 1—4.), yet the children are often corrupted by the parents' example, and thus inherit their curse (Ps. cix. 14. Exod. xx. 5.). Thus the Jews, who opposed our Lord and persecuted His disciples, filled up the measure of their fathers (St. Matt. xxiii. 32, 35.). "Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities" (Lam. v. 7.).

"Think upon thy power." Literally, "Thy Hand," so often stretched out to save Thy people.

"And thy name." So Joshua said, "What wilt Thou do unto Thy 'great Name?' (Josh. vii. 9.). That Name would be dishonoured, if the heathen were suffered to triumph over God's people, who were called by His Name (Ezek. xx. 14.).

7. "We have called to mind." Or, according to another reading, "we are converted from the iniquity of our fathers," or, we have renounced it in our heart. The heavy judgments of God had filled them with fear, and made them shun the sins which had brought the evil upon them.

8. "To be subject to payments." Literally, "for debt," which has been generally understood to refer to the debt or obligation of sin, which made them guilty before God, and subject to His sentence of condemnation. Grotius takes it to mean, "debts to human creditors," as foretold in Deut. xxviii. 44. It was a part of their penalty to be subjected to extortion, and the exacting of usury.

BARUCH, III.

9 Hear, Israel, the commandments of life: give ear to understand wisdom.

10 How happeneth it, Israel, that thou art in thine enemies' land, that thou art waxen old in a strange country, that thou art defiled with the dead,

^c Ps. 28. 1.

11 that thou art ^ccounted with them that go down into the grave?

12 Thou hast forsaken the fountain of wisdom.

^d Ps. 81. 13,
14.

13 ^d For if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou shouldest have dwelled in peace for ever.

14 Learn where is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding; that thou mayest know also where is length of days, and life, where is the light of the eyes, and peace.

^e Job 28. 12,
20.

15 ^e Who hath found out her place? or who hath come into her treasures?

9. "Hear, Israel." This is the beginning of the second division of the book, the exhortation which follows the prayer.

10. "Waxen old." With premature decay, hastened by trials, anxieties, and sorrows (Ps. lxxviii. 33; xc. 9.).

"Defiled with the dead." Either literally, being compelled to assist in the embalming of dead bodies in Babylon; or figuratively, associating with the dead heathen, in a city whose wickedness rendered it unclean as a sepulchre.

12. "The fountain of wisdom;" that is, God Himself, "the Fountain of living waters" (Jer. ii. 13.), and the Well of life (Ps. xxxvi. 9.); the Father of the Eternal Word, Who is the brightness or effulgence of His glory (Heb. i. 3.), and the Fountain from Whom the Spirit also proceeds. The Law might also be called the fountain of wisdom, pouring forth its precepts as streams to water the souls of men, that they may yield fruit to God (*St. Athanasius* and *St. Chrysostom*).

13. "In peace for ever." Jerusalem would have truly answered to its name, as a city of peace, its citizens being at peace among themselves, and secure from the assaults of foreign enemies. See Is. xlviii. 18. Ps. lxxx. 13, 14.

14. "Learn where is wisdom." Israel had sought prudence, strength, and skill, by intrigues and alliances with foreign nations, and other worldly means. The event proved that they had sought it amiss. They had hewed them out broken cisterns which could hold no water. Let them now resort to Him Who is the only true "Strength of Israel."

"Light of the eyes;" that is, joy, health, or prosperity. See Prov. iii. 1, 2; ix. 11.

15. "Her treasures," which no mere human skill can discover, or earthly wealth purchase (Job xxviii. 12, 15, 16. Prov. iii. 14, 15; viii. 10, 11. Wisd. vii. 8, 9, 11, 12, 14.).

BARUCH, III.

16 Where are the princes of the heathen become, and such as ruled the beasts upon the earth ;

17 they that had their pastime with the fowls of the air, and they that hoarded up silver and gold, wherein men trust, and made no end of their getting ?

18 For they that wrought in silver, and were so careful, and whose works are unsearchable,

19 they are vanished and gone down to the grave, and others are come up in their steads.

20 Young men have seen light, and dwelt upon the earth : but the way of knowledge have they not known,

21 nor understood the paths thereof, nor laid hold of it : their children were far off from that way.

22 It hath not been heard of in Chanaan, [†] neither [†] Jer. 40. 7. hath it been seen in Theman.

23 The Agarenes that seek wisdom upon earth,

16, 17. Instead of searching for wisdom, the princes of the heathen spend their time in hunting wild beasts and birds, or in amassing silver and gold. They catch birds to divert them with their song, or fill their coffers with gold for their satisfaction.

18. "Wrought in silver;" perhaps coining it in money. Though they were so careful in heaping up this wealth, and hiding it where it might not be searched out or discovered, yet these riches often fall into the hands of others, or become the prey of the spoiler. So Eccles. v. 13, 14. Others explain it: "The number of their works is so great as to be unsearchable, or past reckoning."

19. "They are vanished." They die, and are forgotten, having no sign of virtue to show (Wisd. v. 13, 14.).

"Others are come up." Others succeed to the wealth which they have amassed, or to the kingdoms which they have founded (Eccles. ii. 18, 19.).

20. "Young men." The successors of those "who are gone down to the grave" (ver. 19.), have also their days of prosperity, during which they "see the light," and enjoy the wealth or power which their predecessors have left them ; but they are as far as they were from the ways of God and of true wisdom.

22. "In Chanaan." Neither the Phœnicians of Tyre and Sidon, who were of the posterity of Canaan (Gen. x. 15), nor the Edomites who dwelt in Teman (Jer. xlix. 7, 20.), had attained to the light of God's law, though their land bordered upon the possession of the tribes of Israel ; and the Phœnicians were eminent for their wealth, skill, and enterprise, as the chief merchants of the world. Yet God's truth was hidden from them.

23. "The Agarenes." The posterity of Hagar and Ishmael, noted for their trade in spices (Gen. xxxvii. 25.), and the merchants of "Mearah that is beside Sidon" (Josh. xiii. 4.), or of Teman in Idumæa, and the "wise men of the East," who were noted for their parables, maxims, or profound researches,—none of these had attained to the

² Or,
expounders.

the merchants of Meran and of Theman, the ² authors of fables, and searchers out of understanding ; none of these have known the way of wisdom, or remember her paths.

24 O Israel, how great is the house of God ! and how large is the place of his possession !

25 Great, and hath none end ; high, and unmeasurable.

26 There were the giants famous from the beginning, that were of so great stature, and so expert in war.

27 Those did not the Lord choose, neither gave he the way of knowledge unto them :

28 but they were destroyed, because they had no wisdom, and perished through their own foolishness.

⁵ Deut. 30.

12, 13.

29 ⁵ Who hath gone up into heaven, and taken her, and brought her down from the clouds ?

Rom. 10. 6, 7.

30 Who hath gone over the sea, and found her, and will bring her for pure gold ?

truths that were revealed to Israel. Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, "As for His judgments, they have not known them." It was the chief advantage and glory of Israel, that unto them were committed the oracles of God (Rom. iii. 1, 2.).

24. "The house of God;" that is, the great and wide universe which He has created, and of which the Temple at Jerusalem was a type or representation. But though the universe is great and glorious, and, as it were, boundless and immeasurable, yet He Who made it is far greater ; and it is from Him, and not from any created things, that true wisdom is to be obtained. See Wisd. xiii. 3, 4, 5.

26. "There were the giants." There, that is, "in this universe, which "is God's house," the giants were produced, the Nephilim, who perished in the flood (Gen. vi. 4. Wisd. xiv. 6. Eccelus. xvi. 7.).

27. "Those did not the Lord choose." Instead of choosing those who excelled other men in strength, or taking the most powerful and numerous of the nations for His inheritance, God chose those who were the "fewest of all people," and weakened by their affliction in Egypt (Deut. vii. 7, 8.).

29, 30. "Who hath gone up," &c. This is taken from Deut. xxx. 12, 13. It speaks of God's gracious condescension to His people in placing His Word within their reach, so that the truths to which the great and mighty and wise men of the world could not attain, were made known to the simple and ignorant, even to children and babes (St. Matt. xi. 25, 26. Rom. x. 6, 7.). They had no need to undertake a perilous voyage to unknown shores beyond the ocean, or to descend into the abyss, or the abode of the dead, to obtain this treasure ; for God had chosen to deposit it in one little spot in His immense universe, and that spot was the land of Israel.

BARUCH, III.

31 No man knoweth her way, nor thinketh of her path.

32 But he that knoweth all things knoweth her, and hath found her out with his understanding: he that prepared the earth for evermore hath filled it with fourfooted beasts:

33 he that sendeth forth light, and it goeth, calleth it *again*, and it obeyeth him with fear.

34 The stars shined in their watches, and rejoiced: when ^h he calleth them, they say, Here we be; and ^h Ps. 117. 4. so with cheerfulness they shewed light unto him that made them.

35 This is our God, and there shall none other be accounted of in comparison of him.

36 He hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it unto Jacob his servant, and to Israel his beloved.

37 ⁱAfterward did he shew himself upon earth, ⁱ Prov. 8. 31. and conversed with men. ^{John 1. 14.}

"Pure," or choice, "gold." Wisdom could not be purchased with corruptible treasure, for "all gold in respect of her is as a little sand" (Wisd. vii. 9. Job xxviii. 14—17.).

31. "Thinketh of her path." The path of Divine truth cannot be ascertained by mere thinking and reasoning. Plato said, "We can know "nothing certain about God, but what He unfolds to us." Cp. Job xxviii. 12, 13.

32. "He that knoweth all things." This is probably taken from Job xxviii. 23, 24, &c. The peopling of the earth with quadrupeds, and the ordering of the heavenly bodies, is mentioned here, that the marvel of God's condescension to Israel may be increased by the consideration of these instances of His infinite power and wisdom in the disposal of all things.

33. "Obeyeth Him with fear;" that is, "instantly," like a servant who fears to offend his lord by the least hesitation or delay in executing his orders.

34. "Here we be." This is taken from Job xxxviii. 35, "Canst thou "send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?" The stars are often compared to a host or army, and, in pursuance of the same metaphor, they are said to shine "in their watches."

35. "This is our God." What an honour is this that has been bestowed upon us, that One so unspeakably great and glorious should have chosen us for His own people!

37. "Afterward." Besides revealing His holy laws to Israel, God also condescended to have His tabernacle amongst them, and there to receive their offerings and to reveal His Will to them. The first condescension to His people was His descending upon Mount Sinai, and making known His commandments to them by the Voice out of the

BARUCH, IV.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The book of commandments is that wisdom which was commended in the former chapter. 25 The Jews are moved to patience, and to hope for the deliverance.*

THIS is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that endureth for ever: all they that keep it *shall come to life*; but such as leave it shall die.

2 Turn thee, O Jacob, and take hold of it: walk

midst of the fire. Then seventy of the elders of Israel saw His glory (Exod. xxiv. 10.). Immediately afterwards, Moses received the commandment, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among "them" (Exod. xxv. 8.). Here God showed Himself upon earth, for He said, "There I will meet with the children of Israel, and the "tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory" (Exod. xxix. 43, 45.). He also promised to meet with Moses, and to commune with him from above the mercy seat (Exod. xxv. 22.). There seems to be no sufficient reason for the rejection of this verse as a late Christian interpolation. It was in all the ancient copies of the book, and was quoted by many of the Fathers as a saying of Jeremiah or Baruch. The reference being to the tabernacle, it is rightly applied by them to the mystery which was foreshown by the tabernacle, "The Word made flesh and tabernacle "cling among us." The whole passage (vv. 35—37.) was much used in controversy, either as one of the prophecies which were fulfilled in the coming of Emmanuel as God with us, having His conversation with men in the substance of our flesh; or as an evidence in the controversy with the Arians that Jesus Christ was truly God, the Divine Person Who appeared to the Patriarchs, and the Giver of the Law on Mount Sinai. Several ancient writers connect it with the prophecy in Is. xlv. 21—23, applying both to Christ, and inferring from both passages that the Word Incarnate Who conversed with men is the One true God, Who says, "I am God, and there is none else" (Hippolytus, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Lactantius, Athanasius, Zeno of Verona, Phæbadius, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, St. Amphilochius, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, Marius Mercator, &c.). "He is truly "Emmanuel, God with us; for He being in the form of God took the "seed of Abraham and the form of a servant, and was seen as man upon "earth."

CHAPTER IV.

1. "This is the book," &c. The reference is to iii. 36, above. "The way of knowledge, which God gave to Jacob, is the Book of the "Divine Law." Though the ceremonial and political precepts of the Law were temporary, its moral precepts were of everlasting obligation (St. Matt. v. 18.).

"To life." God gave Israel the Law, that by observing it they might enjoy safety and happiness. "The man that doeth them shall live in "them" (Lev. xviii. 5.). He set before them life and death, that they might avoid the way of death and choose life (Deut. xxx. 19. Ps. xix. 11.).

BARUCH, IV.

²in the presence of the light thereof, that thou mayest be illuminated. ² Gr. to the shining before the light thereof.

3 Give not thine honour to another, nor the things that are profitable unto thee to a strange nation.

4 O Israel, happy are we: for things that are pleasing to God are made known unto us.

5 Be of good cheer, my people, the memorial of Israel.

6 ^a Ye were sold to the nations, not for [your] destruction: but because ye moved God to wrath, ye were delivered unto the enemies. ^a Is. 50. 1. & 52. 3.

7 For ye provoked him that made you by ^b sacrificing unto devils, and not to God. ^b Deut. 32. 17. 1 Cor. 10. 29.

8 Ye have forgotten the everlasting God, that brought you up; and ye have grieved Jerusalem, that nursed you.

9 For when she saw the wrath of God coming

2. "In the presence;" or, "in the path which its light indicates," as a lantern sheds light upon the way, whilst darkness prevails around (Ps. cxix. 105. Prov. vi. 23.). So in Is. ii. 5, the house of Jacob is invited "to walk in the light of the Lord."

3. "Thine honour." The special privileges of Israel, their nearness to God as His firstborn, and their priesthood, and all the things that were profitable to them, would be forfeited and transferred to others, if they should be unfaithful to the Law. See Deut. xxxii. 21.

4. "Happy are we." See Deut. iv. 7, 8; xxxiii. 29. Yet this knowledge would but increase their condemnation, if their practice was contrary to it. Hence the tribulation and wrath is for the Jew first, and then for the Gentiles who do not obey the truth (Rom. ii. 8, 9.). "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (St. John xiii. 17.).

5. "Memorial of Israel." The small remnant, through whom the name of Israel was preserved from oblivion. Though they were apparently abandoned, and given into the power of the heathen, this was not "for destruction," or in order that the entire nation should perish. They were sold (Is. i. 1; lii. 3.), because they first sold themselves to work iniquity (1 Kin. xxi. 25.).

7. "To devils." To demons, or idols; Hebrew, "Shadim," or lords (Deut. xxxii. 17. Ps. cvi. 37, 38.). The word denotes any object of worship other than the true God, and not merely the more malignant ones, who are distinguished by another name (Lev. xvii. 7. 2 Chr. xi. 15.).

8. "Ye have grieved." By a poetical metaphor Jerusalem is compared to a mother who is ruined or disgraced by the faults of her children. It may be compared with Jer. xxxi. 15, where the afflictions of the tribe of Benjamin are said to be the cause of mourning to their mother Rachel.

BARUCH, IV.

upon you, she said, Hearken, O ye that dwell about Sion : God hath brought upon me great mourning ;

10 for I saw the captivity of my sons and daughters, which the Everlasting brought upon them.

11 With joy did I nourish them ; but sent them away with weeping and mourning.

12 Let no man rejoice over me, a widow, and forsaken of many, who for the sins of my children am left desolate ; because they departed from the law of God.

13 They knew not his statutes, nor walked in the ways of his commandments, nor trod in the paths² of discipline in his righteousness.

² Or, of his discipline in righteousness.

14 Let them that dwell about Sion come, and remember ye the captivity of my sons and daughters, which the Everlasting hath brought upon them.

¹ Deut. 28. 49, 50.

15 For ^che hath brought a nation upon them from far, a shameless nation, and of a strange language, who neither revered old man, nor pitied child.

16 These have carried away the dear beloved children of the widow, and left her that was alone desolate without daughters.

17 But what can I help you ?

9. "Ye that dwell about Sion ;" that is, the neighbouring cities of Judah, as in ver. 24. Jerusalem is said to be a warning to her neighbours, who had reason to tremble for themselves, lest similar calamities should overtake them.

12. "Of many." A large portion of her citizens, "all the nobles of "Judah and Jerusalem" (Jer. xxvii. 20.), having shared the captivity of Jeconiah.

14. "Remember ye ;" that is, "consider," or weigh in your mind. Compare Eccles. vii. 36, "Remember the end" (Eccles. xi. 8.).

15. "Shameless." In Deut. xxviii. 50, "a nation strong of face," or of fierce countenance ; bold, reckless, and pertinacious. See Dan. viii. 23. The cruelty of the Chaldeans is described in 2 Chr. xxxvi. 17 ; their courage and swiftness in Jer. iv. 13. Lam. iv. 19. Is. v. 26—29.

16. "Children of the widow ;" that is, "my beloved ones," leaving me desolate and a widow.

17. "What can I help you ?" She addresses her children, who are gone into captivity. The remnant that were left in Jerusalem could not save themselves or the city ; still less could they effect the restoration of their brethren in captivity.

BARUCH, IV.

18 For he that brought these plagues upon you will deliver you from the hands of your enemies.

19 Go your way, O my children, go your way: for I am left desolate.

20 I have put off the clothing of ² peace, and put ² Or, prosperity.
upon me the sackcloth of my prayer: I will cry unto the Everlasting ³ d in my days.

21 Be of good cheer, O my children, cry unto the Lord, and he shall deliver you from the power and hand of the enemies. ³ Or, in the time of mine affliction.
d Ps. 116. 2. & 137. 7.

22 For my hope is in the Everlasting, that he will save you; and joy is come unto me from the Holy One, because of the mercy which shall soon come unto you from the Everlasting our Saviour.

23 For I sent you out with mourning and weeping: but God will give you to me again with joy and gladness for ever.

24 Like as now the neighbours of Sion have seen your captivity: so shall they see shortly your salvation from our God, which shall come upon you with great glory, and brightness of the Everlasting.

25 My children, suffer patiently the wrath that is come upon you from God: for thine enemy hath

19 "Go your way." Thus she parts with her children at God's command, and bids them submit to His ordering, and leave her to mourn in her desolation.

20. "Clothing of peace." The festival attire and ornaments, the signs of joy, wealth, and prosperity, must be laid aside for the garments of mourning and widowhood. Compare Judith viii. 4, 5.

"My prayer." The humble petition which I make in my sore affliction, "pouring out my complaint" to God (Ps. cxlii. 2.) "in my days," or "as long as I live" (Ps. cxvi. 2.); or the "days of my mourning" (Is. lx. 20.), which should continue for seventy years (Jer. xxv. 11, 12.).

22. "The Everlasting." In Him, in Whose sight these years are but as one day (Ps. xc. 4.). He is also the "Holy One," Who is faithful and true to His covenant, and will give us the sure mercies of David (Ps. lxxxix. 35.), even though we seem to be forsaken for a time.

23. "With joy and gladness." Such is the promise in Jer. xxxi. 13, "I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow." See also Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6. Jer. xxxi. 9; l. 4.

24. "The neighbours." The heathen nations around, especially Moab, Edom, and Ammon, who triumphed in the desolation of Zion (Jer. xlviii. 27—29. Ps. cxxxvii. 7. Ezek. xxv. 3, 8.).

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persecuted thee; but shortly thou shalt see his destruction, and shalt tread upon his neck.

² Or, *My darlings.*

26 ² My delicate ones have gone rough ways, and were taken away as a flock caught of the enemies.

27 Be of good comfort, O my children, and cry unto God: for ye shall be remembered of him that brought these things upon you.

28 For as it was your mind to go astray from God: so, being returned, seek him ten times more.

29 For he that hath brought these plagues upon you shall bring you everlasting joy again with your salvation.

30 Take a good heart, O Jerusalem: for he that gave thee that name will comfort thee.

31 Miserable are they that afflicted thee, and rejoiced at thy fall.

25. "His destruction." The fall of Babylon and the Chaldean monarchy before the victorious armies of the Medes and Persians, as foretold in Jer. i. 1, li., and elsewhere. Then the Jews should see their enemies humbled to the dust, as in the time of Joshua (Josh. x. 24. Ps. lx. 12.).

26. "Rough ways." Their tender feet were compelled to go unshod (Jer. ii. 25.) over sharp rocks and stony places. But a retribution should overtake the delicate ones of Babylon (Is. xlvii. 1.), and then the rough ways should be made smooth for the returning captives of Israel (Is. xl. 3, 4.). See also Lam. iv. 5. Deut. xxviii. 56, on the sufferings of the tender and delicate.

"Caught;" or, made a prey for the enemy. See Jer. xii. 7. Ezek. xxxiv. 5. St. John x. 12.

27. "That brought [these things upon] you." Or, "He Who brought you into Babylon, will remember you and bring you back again to your land." The other rendering is suggested by ver. 29, below.

28. "As it was your mind," &c. As you multiplied your sins formerly, so now multiply your efforts in the way of repentance. So St. Paul says, Rom. vi. 13, 19: "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." "If you were servants before, you must be so now: it is but justice and reason that at least as much should be done for God as for the devil. It is not enough morally to revoke what is past by wishing it had not been done; we must oppose a state to a state, a habit to a habit, in order that the evil may be driven out by the good, as one nail is by another" (*Jer. Taylor*). See Eph. iv. 28. If their repentance was thus proportioned to their sin, then God's consolations would greatly outweigh the evils which He sent upon them (Jer. xxxi. 28. Is. liv. 8.).

30. "That gave thee that name;" or, "that named thee," claiming Israel as His own people, who are called by His Name (as above, ii. 15.).

BARUCH, IV.

32 Miserable are the cities which thy children served : miserable is she that received thy sons.

33 For as she rejoiced at thy ruin, and was glad of thy fall : so shall she be grieved for her own desolation.

34 For I will take away the rejoicing of her great multitude, and her pride shall be turned into mourning.

35 For fire shall come upon her from the Everlasting, long to endure ; and she shall be inhabited of devils for a great time.

36 ° O Jerusalem, look about thee toward the east, ^{e ch. 5. 5.} and behold the joy that cometh unto thee from God.

37 Lo, thy sons come, whom thou sentest away, they come gathered together from the east to the west by the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the glory of God.

CHAPTER V.

1 Jerusalem is moved to rejoice, 5 and to behold their return out of captivity with glory.

32. "Miserable are the cities," &c. Especially Nineveh, which is said to be "laid waste," or "miserable," in Nah. iii. 7, and Babylon, the city that received the sons of Zion into bondage and captivity.

34. "Of her great multitude." So in the Syriac Epistle of Baruch : "Behold now we see the multitude of the heathen in their prosperity, although they do wickedly ; but they shall vanish like the smoke. We behold the greatness of their power, though they do perversely ; but they shall be as a drop of dew. We see them established in strength, though they resist the Most High at every moment ; but they shall be accounted as nothing, and though they now live in splendour, they shall wither as grass."

35. "Fire." A type of utter destruction, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Is. xiii. 19. Jer. xlix. 18 ; l. 40.). Fire is also a frequent type of the wrath of God (Deut. xxxii. 22.). On the desolation of Babylon, see Is. xiii. 20, 21, where the LXX. has, "the demons shall dwell there," as if superstition should add to the terrors of the wild and noxious beasts by which it should be infested (Is. xxxiv. 13—15.).

36. "Towards the east." The Jews' deliverance through Cyrus came from the East. This was a type of the Advent of the Saviour, Whose Name is the East, the Branch, or the Sun-rising. See Is. xli. 2 ; xlv. 11. Zech. vi. 12.

37. "By the word of the Holy One." As the Holy One had promised by His prophets, as in Is. xliii. 5, 6 ; xlix. 12, 18 ; lx. 4. See also v. 5. This portion of the Book of Baruch, together with the parallel passages from the prophets, was quoted by St. Irenæus, as pointing to a restoration of the glory of the earthly Jerusalem in the latter days, before the appearing of Antichrist.

PUT off, O Jerusalem, the garment of thy mourning and affliction, and put on the comeliness of the glory that cometh from God for ever.

2 Cast about thee a double garment of the righteousness which cometh from God; and set a diadem on thine head of the glory of the Everlasting.

3 For God will shew thy brightness unto every country under heaven.

4 For thy name shall be called of God for ever The peace of righteousness, and The glory of God's worship.

5 Arise, O Jerusalem, and stand on high, and ^a look about toward the east, and behold thy children gathered from the west unto the east by the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the remembrance of God.

^a ch. 4. 36.

6 For they departed from thee on foot, and were led away of their enemies: but God bringeth them

CHAPTER V.

1. "Put on," &c. This is a paraphrase of Is. lii. 1, 2. Jerusalem having been humbled to the dust by her heavy affliction, is now restored to her former glory and beauty by the favour of God. The ornaments with which she is arrayed are her children, who return and occupy her waste places (Is. xlix. 18, 19.). These promises to Zion belong in a higher sense to the Church which is the Bride of Christ (Rev. xix. 7, 8; xxi. 9—11.).

2. "Double garment," or "mantle," such as was worn by prophets or priests (1 Sam. xv. 27.). This has probably a special reference to the restoration of the Temple and priesthood: the priests being clothed with righteousness, as signified by the holy garments, and the High Priest wearing his diadem, crown, or mitre, with "Holiness unto the Lord" inscribed upon it. See on Wisd. xviii. 24. Ps. cxxxii. 9, 16. 2 Chr. vi. 41.

3. "Thy brightness." God's glory should be seen upon her (Is. lx. 2.); and being enlightened by Him, she should enlighten others. This was to have its higher fulfilment in Christ's Church.

4. "The peace of righteousness." The peace which is the effect of righteousness; the security which they should obtain by faithful adherence to God's law. So in Jer. xxxiii. 16, Jerusalem obtains the name of "the Lord our righteousness," and "dwells safely," and is thus a true Salem, or abode of peace.

"Glory of God's worship;" or, "the glory of godliness." Her people should be honoured by all nations for their piety and devotion (Deut. iv. 6.).

5. "In the remembrance of God." Recounting His benefits with joy and thanksgiving. See above, iv. 36.

BARUCH, V.

unto thee exalted with glory, as children of the kingdom.

7 For God hath appointed that ^b every high hill, ^b Is. 40. 4. and banks of long continuance, should be cast down, and valleys filled up, to make even the ground, that Israel may go safely in the glory of God.

8 Moreover even the woods and every sweet-smelling tree shall overshadow Israel by the commandment of God.

9 For God shall lead Israel with joy in the light of his glory with the mercy and righteousness that cometh from him.

THE EPISTLE OF JEREMY.

CHAPTER VI.

1 The cause of the captivity is their sin. 3 The place whereto they were carried is Babylon: the vanity of whose idols and idolatry are set forth at large in this chapter.

6. "As children of the kingdom." The captives returned to Jerusalem with the honour of princes or persons of noble rank, the munificence of the Persian king providing them with horses, mules, and camels (Ezra ii. 64—67. Is. lxvi. 20.). This is contrasted with the humiliation and degradation to which they were reduced when they were led or driven by their conquerors into the land of their exile. According to the other reading, "They were lifted up like the throne of a kingdom." So Jerusalem is called "the throne of the Lord," in Jer. iii. 17; xiv. 21.

7. "Banks of long continuance;" or, "everlasting hills," as in Gen. xlix. 26. All hindrances should be removed, and the way made plain and easy for the return of Israel to their own land. Before Zerubbabel the great mountain should become a plain (Zech. iv. 7.); especially the mountains of man's pride and ambition, worldly kingdoms and empires. Great armies were preceded by pioneers, who filled up hollows and smoothed rough places along the line of march; and this was a type of the preparation of the way of the Lord, both in the restoration of Jerusalem after the Captivity, and in the coming of Christ and of the kingdom of heaven (St. Luke iii. 4, 5.).

8. "Overshadow Israel." As the cloud was a protection from the heat, when they came out of Egypt (Is. iv. 6.), so in the journey from Babylon they should be refreshed by the shade and fragrance of the trees, and the hills and woods should rejoice and exult with them (Is. lv. 12; xxxv. 1, 2.), or contribute to their joy.

9. "In the light of his glory." The allusion here is to the pillar of fire, as in the verse before to the pillar of the cloud. Israel should experience His "mercy" in their deliverance from their affliction, whilst their oppressors should be punished for their cruelty, and thus experience His "justice."

CHAPTER VI.

"The Epistle of Jeremy." This is properly a separate treatise or

A copy of an epistle, which Jeremy sent unto them which were to be led captives into Babylon by the king of the Babylonians, to certify them, as it was commanded him of God.

BECAUSE of the sins which ye have committed before God, ye shall be led away captives into Babylon by Nabuchodonosor king of the Babylonians.

3 So when ye be come unto Babylon, ye shall remain there many years, and for a long season, namely, seven generations: and after that I will bring you away peaceably from thence.

^a Ps. 115. 4.
& 135. 15.
Is. 44. 8,
9, 10, & 46.
5. 6, 7.
Wisd. 13. 10.
2 Macc. 2. 2.

4 ^a Now shall ye see in Babylon gods of silver, and of gold, and of wood, borne upon shoulders, which cause the nations to fear.

5 Beware therefore that ye in no wise be like to strangers, neither be ye afraid of them, when ye see the multitude before them and behind them, worshipping them.

6 But say ye in your hearts, O Lord, we must worship thee.

7 For mine angel is with you, and I myself caring for your souls.

book of the Apocrypha, though it is annexed to Baruch as a sixth chapter in the Vulgate. It is a supposed message from the Prophet Jeremiah to the captives in Riblah, after the last siege of Jerusalem, in which Zedekiah was taken and deprived of sight (2 Kin. xxv. 5—7.). It has but little connexion with the contents of Baruch, and is probably to be ascribed to a different author. Its subject is the idolatry and degrading superstitions of Babylon, and expresses that abhorrence of idols which the Captivity produced in the minds of the Jews, a permanent reaction against the abuses of their fathers, which was one of the most remarkable features in the history of the chosen people.

“Which were to be led captives.” Zedekiah and the other prisoners were detained at Riblah for a short time before their departure to Babylon.

3. “Seven generations.” The duration of the Captivity was for seventy years, or at the most three generations. Grotius supposed that there was an error in the text, and that the Greek should be “seven decads,” which would answer to the ten weeks of the Hebrews (Jer. xxv. 11, 12.).

4. “To fear.” The chief source of superstition is the fear or slavish dread of a being who is thought to have irresistible power to hurt.

7. “Mine angel.” This may be “Michael the prince” (Dan. xii. 1.).

“Caring for your souls.” God Himself would require an account of their souls, that is, avenge their death. So the word is used in Gen. ix. 5,

8 As for their tongue, it is polished by the workman, and they themselves are gilded and laid over with silver; ^b yet are they but false, and cannot speak. b Ps. 135. 16

9 And taking gold, as it were for a virgin that loveth to go gay, they make crowns for the heads of their gods.

10 Sometimes also the priests convey from their gods gold and silver, and bestow it upon themselves.

11 Yea, they will give thereof to the ² common harlots, and deck them as men with garments, [being] gods of silver, and gods of gold, and wood. ² Or, which prostitute themselves openly.

12 Yet cannot these gods save themselves from rust and moths, though they be covered with purple raiment.

13 They wipe their faces because of the dust of the temple, when there is much upon them.

14 And he that cannot put to death one that offendeth him holdeth a sceptre, as though he were a judge of the country.

15 He hath also in his right hand a dagger and an ax: but cannot deliver himself from war and thieves.

16 Whereby they are known not to be gods: therefore fear them not.

17 For like as a vessel that a man useth is nothing worth when it is broken; even so it is with their gods: when they be set up in the tem-

and elsewhere. They were not to be afraid to despise the idols, for God cared for His people as for the apple of His eye (Zech. ii. 7, 8.).

9. "Loveth to go gay." "One who is fond of ornaments" (Jer. ii. 32.). Whilst they think they are propitiating the gods, they are only enriching the priests.

11. "Common harlots;" or, the prostitutes who are within the same walls with themselves. Here, and in ver. 43 below, there may be an allusion to the devotees of Mylitta, the Babylonian Venus, described by Herodotus (I. cap. 199.).

"Deck them with garments." Having stripped the silver and gold off the idols, they dress them out in men's clothes, perhaps to conceal the theft.

13—15. The idols are arrayed as kings in purple, or hold sceptres or weapons; but they are so far from having any power to hurt, that they cannot even protect their faces from dust, or their clothes from moths. The dagger and axe would be emblems of the god of war. Some of the idols of the Assyrians were represented with a bow and arrows.

ple, their eyes be full of dust through the feet of them that come in.

² Or, *courts*. 18 And as the ² doors are made sure on every side upon him that offendeth the king, as being committed to suffer death: even so the priests make fast their temples with doors, with locks, and bars, lest *their gods* be spoiled with robbers.

19 They light them candles, yea, more than for themselves, whereof they cannot see one.

³ Gr. *licked*. 20 They are as one of the beams of the temple, yet they say their hearts are ³ gnawed upon by things creeping out of the earth; and when they eat them and their clothes, they feel it not.

21 Their faces are blacked through the smoke that cometh out of the temple.

22 Upon their bodies and heads sit bats, swallows, and birds, and the cats also.

23 By this ye may know that they are no gods: therefore fear them not.

24 Notwithstanding the gold that is about them to make them beautiful, except they wipe off the rust, they will not shine: for neither when they were molten did they feel it.

⁴ Or, *any price*. 25 The things wherein there is no breath are bought for ⁴ a most high price.

18. "Him that offendeth," &c. A criminal or prisoner under sentence of death (not as in the Vulgate, "like a dead man carried to the "grave"). The idol temples are secured with bars and locks, like prisons, as a security against sacrilege.

19. "Candles." What madness is this, says Lactantius, to make presents of candles and wax lights to the author and giver of light?

20. "Gnawed upon by things creeping;" rather, "licked by serpents and worms." Some of the idols which were outwardly gold or silver might be stuffed with earth and other frail matter, and thus their "hearts" would nourish worms.

21. "The smoke" of the sacrifices and victims consumed on their altars.

22. "Sit," in the Greek "fly;" that is, settle upon them in their flight. So in Is. ii. 20, the idols of silver and gold are cast to the moles and bats, as being of no use in the time of peril. Perhaps the allusion here is to idols that were left in abandoned or ruined temples. The Vulgate has "owls" instead of "bats."

"Cats." Cats were tamed and employed by the ancient Egyptians, but it is probable that wild cats are here intended (*Tristram*).

24. "Notwithstanding," &c.; or, "unless the rust is wiped off the

26 °They are borne upon shoulders, having no feet, whereby they declare unto men that they be nothing worth. c Is. 46. 7.
ver. 4.

27 They also that serve them are ashamed: for if they fall to the ground at any time, they cannot rise up again of themselves: neither, if one set them upright, can they move of themselves: neither, if they be bowed down, can they make themselves straight: but they set ² gifts before them, as ² Or, offerings. unto dead men.

28 As for the things that are sacrificed unto them, their priests sell and ³ abuse; in like manner ³ Or, spend. their wives lay up part thereof in salt; but unto the poor and impotent they give nothing of it.

29 Menstruous women and women in childbed ^d eat their sacrifices: by these things ye may know ^d Lev. 12. 4. that they are no gods: fear them not.

30 For how can they be called gods? because women set meat before the gods of silver, gold, and wood.

31 And the priests sit in their temples, having

“gold that is put on them for ornament, they will not glitter.” They can neither see nor feel it themselves.

26, 27. “Upon shoulders.” See Is. xlvi. 6, 7, and the description of the household gods in Wisd. xiii. 15, 16, &c., and the fall of Dagon in 1 Sam. v. 3, 4. In Is. xli. 7. Wisd. xiii. 15, the idol requires nails to secure it in its place.

“Gifts.” Some render it, “apply the palm of the hand” to support it, as the Greek word sometimes means a “handbreadth.” But the meaning may be, “gifts are set before them, which they can no more “receive than dead men.” See Bel and the Dragon 3, *Note*.

28. “Lay up in salt.” They salt the flesh, or preserve it in brine or pickle. So Herodotus relates of the Egyptians that they dried some of their fish in the sun and ate it raw, and the rest they preserved in brine; and they did the same with quails and other birds. See on Wisd. xvi. 2.

“Unto the poor and impotent.” The last word means “destitute” or “oppressed,” as in Job v. 15. In the sacrifices and offerings required by God in the Law, the priests and Levites were to share with the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. See Deut. xiv. 28, 29.

29. “Women,” who according to the Jewish Law were forbidden to touch any hallowed thing, or to come into the sanctuary until forty days after the birth of a son, or eighty days after the birth of a daughter (Lev. xii.), were admitted freely to the idol temples and sacrifices. This is mentioned as another indignity, which the idols, if they had any power, would resent. Another slight to the gods whom they professed to serve was their leaving their offerings to be performed by women, perhaps degraded women, like the devotees of Mylitta (ver. 11, above).

31. “The priests sit,” &c. With all the signs of mourning for the

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their clothes rent, and their heads and beards shaven, and nothing upon their heads.

32 They roar and cry before their gods, as men do at the feast when one is dead.

33 The priests also take off their garments, and clothe their wives and children.

34 Whether it be evil that one doeth unto them, or good, they are not able to recompense it: they can neither set up a king, nor put him down.

35 In like manner, they can neither give riches nor money: though a man make a vow unto them, and keep it not, they will not require it.

36 They can save no man from death, neither deliver the weak from the mighty.

37 They cannot restore a blind man to his sight, nor help any man in his distress.

38 They can shew no mercy to the widow, nor do good to the fatherless.

39 Their gods of wood, and which are overlaid with gold and silver, are like the stones that be

dead, the idols being often images of dead men, to whom temples and altars were erected by the heathen, with gloomy rites resembling those of a funeral. See on Wisd. xiv. 15. Such were the rites of Tammuz (Ezek. viii. 14.). In order to widen the distinction between idolatry and the worship of the true God, the Levitical priests were forbidden to uncover their heads or to rend their clothes (Lev. xxi. 10, 11.).

32. "They roar." Working themselves up into a frenzy, like the prophets of Baal (1 Kin. xviii. 26—28.). See also Wisd. xiv. 28.

"Feast." The funeral banquet, described in Jer. xvi. 7, 8, at which the cup of consolation was given, especially after the death of a parent; hence it was called "parentalia."

33. "Their garments." The garments in which the idols are arrayed, and the ornaments bestowed on them by their worshippers, as above, vv. 10, 11.

34. "To recompense it." So Isaiah challenges the idols: "Do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed" (Is. xli. 23.); also to reveal things to come, as the God of Israel had done: "Shew the things that are to come hereafter." These predictions were also evidences of His power to control the affairs of men, the rise and fall of kingdoms; "to set up a king, or to put him down" (Jer. xviii. 7—10. Dan. iv. 3, 35, 37.). It was never pretended that the gods of the heathen possessed this power.

35. "They will not require it." See on Wisd. xiv. 29—31, where it is shown that the guilt of perjury will not go unpunished, although the idol to whom the oath is made is powerless to avenge the wrong. The words which follow may be compared with Wisd. xiii. 18, 19.

39. "Like the stones." Having neither free will, nor power of motion. The passage is founded upon Is. xlii. 17, 18.

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hewn out of the mountain: they that worship them shall be confounded.

40 How should a man then think and say that they are gods, when even the Chaldeans themselves dishonour them?

41 Who if they shall see one dumb that cannot speak, they ²bring him, and intreat Bel that he may speak, as though he were able to understand. ² Or, *bid him call upon Bel.*

42 Yet they cannot understand this themselves, and leave them: for they have no ³knowledge. ³ Or, *sense.*

43 The women also with cords about them, sitting in the ways, burn bran for perfume: but if any of them, drawn by some that passeth by, lie with him, she reproacheth her fellow, that she was not thought as worthy as herself, nor her cord broken.

44 Whatsoever is done among them is false: how may it then be thought or said that they are gods?

45 ^eThey are made of carpenters and goldsmiths: they can be nothing else than the workmen will have them to be. ^e Is. 44. 12, 13, &c.

40, 41. The Chaldeans expose their gods to contempt and derision by continually requesting them to do what they have no power to effect, and thus revealing their utter impotence and vanity. Bel was the chief idol of Babylon, with a temple of colossal size. See Is. xlvi. 1. Jer. i. 2; li. 44. Bel and the Dragon 3, &c.

43. "Women with cords about them." The token that they were devotees of Mylitta, the Babylonian Venus, called in 2 Kin. xvii. 30, "Succoth-benoth;" the ropes denoting the obligation of the vow which they had taken upon themselves. But in the description of Herodotus the approaches to the temple are said to be "extended as with cords," or in a direct line, as if laid out or measured with a rope. The shameless profligacy of ancient Babylon is perhaps alluded to when the mystical Babylon is called "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters," or the "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (Rev. xvii. 1, 5, 15. Jer. li. 7, 13.). The Hebrew word for "harlot" in Gen. xxxviii. Deut. xxiii. 17. Hos. iv., properly means "consecrated," meaning that the prostitution was in honour of some idol or deity, as in Num. xxv. 1, 2.

"Burn bran for perfume." In the Vulgate: "The women also, with cords about them, sit in the ways, burning olive stones." It is supposed that the Latin translator took the word to mean "a cheese-condiment," which was made from olives. Others trace the word to a Hebrew root, in which case the meaning would be, "they fumigate their persons;" this answers to the description in Strabo's account of ancient Babylon. The breaking of the cord denoted that the woman was freed from the obligation of her vow.

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46 And they themselves that made them can never continue long; how should then the things that are made of them be gods?

47 For they left lies and reproaches to them that come after.

48 For when there cometh any war or plague upon them, the priests consult with themselves, where they may be hidden with them.

49 How then cannot men perceive that they be no gods, which can neither save themselves from war, nor from plague?

^c Ps. 115. 4.
Wisd. 13. 10.

50 ^f For seeing they be but of wood, and overlaid with silver and gold, it shall be known hereafter that they are false:

51 and it shall manifestly appear to all nations and kings that they are no gods, but the works of men's hands, and that there is no work of God in them.

52 Who then may not know that they are no gods?

53 For neither can they set up a king in the land, nor give rain unto men.

54 Neither can they judge their own cause, nor redress a wrong, being unable: for they are as crows between heaven and earth.

46. "Be gods," or immortal beings; the makers of them, being mortal, could not confer immortality upon their works. To pretend that the idols had any virtue in them was a lie and an imposture which must sooner or later be detected, and bring reproach upon its authors; especially when the heathen should be converted to the knowledge of God, and their eyes should be opened to the truth.

48, 49. In time of peril the safety of the idols depends upon the priests; they must be hidden like other goods or household stuff (compare Rachel's concealment of the teraphim, Gen. xxxi. 34, 35.); they cannot save themselves or profit their worshippers. How then can they be gods? (Wisd. xv. 17.)

51. "It shall manifestly appear." Here, as in Wisd. xiv. 13, 14, the total extirpation of idolatry is predicted. It is perhaps inferred from Is. ii. 18. Ezek. xxx. 13. Micah v. 13. Zech. xiii. 2.

53. "Nor give rain." This is taken from Jer. xiv. 22: "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain?" Rain is to be asked of God, because "the idols have spoken vanity" (Zech. x. 1, 2.). Rain was a special sign of the renewal of God's favour to His people upon their repentance (1 Kin. viii. 35, 36.).

54. "Crows between heaven and earth." As ravens and crows are slow and lazy in their flight, seldom soaring far towards the sky,

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55 Whereupon when fire falleth upon the house of gods of wood, or laid over with gold or silver, their priests will flee away, and escape; but they themselves shall be burned asunder like beams.

56 Moreover they cannot withstand any king or enemies: how can it then be thought or said that they be gods?

57 Neither are those gods of wood, and laid over with silver or gold, able to escape either from thieves or robbers.

58 Whose gold, and silver, and garments wherewith they are clothed, they that are strong do take, and go away withal: neither are they able to help themselves.

59 Therefore it is better to be a king that sheweth his power, or else a profitable vessel in an house, which the owner shall have use of, than such false gods; or to be a door in an house, to keep such things safe as be therein, than such false gods; or a pillar of wood in a palace, than such false gods.

60 For sun, moon, and stars, being bright, and sent to do their offices, are obedient.

61 In like manner the lightning when it breaketh forth is easy to be seen; and ² after the same manner the wind bloweth in every country. ² Or, *the same wind.*

62 And when God commandeth the clouds to go over the whole world, they do as they are bidden.

63 And the fire sent from above to consume hills and woods doeth as it is commanded: but these are like unto them neither in shew nor power.

and as it were hesitating to leave the earth, whilst their croaking is like the idle complaints of the slothful and listless; so these idols are a mere burden and a useless encumbrance in the world. The hovering of the crow is a type of uncertainty and suspense, and its drawling cry seems to say "cras," "cras," the word of delay or procrastination.

59. "Idols being useless lumber, any common vessel that is of service to its owner is to be preferred to them." So in Wisd. xiv. 1, &c., the ship is to be preferred to the idols which the mariner takes with him, thinking thereby to ensure a safe passage.

60—63. "Much more are idols inferior to the works of God in heaven and earth, which fulfil the end of their creation, and obey the laws which He has given them." So in Wisd. xiii. 8—10, the error of

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64 Wherefore it is neither to be supposed nor said that they are gods, seeing they are able neither to judge causes, nor to do good unto men.

65 Knowing therefore that they are no gods, fear them not.

66 For they can neither curse nor bless kings :

67 neither can they shew signs in the heavens among the heathen, nor shine as the sun, nor give light as the moon.

68 The beasts are better than they : for they can get under a covert, and help themselves.

69 It is then by no means manifest unto us that they are gods : therefore fear them not.

70 For as a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers keepeth nothing : so are their gods of wood, and laid over with silver and gold.

71 And likewise their gods of wood, and laid over with silver and gold, are like to a white thorn in an orchard, that every bird sitteth upon ; as also to a dead body, that is cast into the dark.

² Or,
*purple and
brightness.*

72 And ye shall know them to be no gods by the ² bright purple that rotteth upon them : and

those who worshipped the powers of nature is said to be less inexcusable than the folly of praying to gods that are made with hands.

67. "Signs in the heavens among the heathen." The superstitious observing of the stars, and tracing events to their influence, was a Babylonian science held in great repute ; and it was an error of the heathen which the Jews were exhorted to avoid. Yet even this superstition was not so degrading as idolatry. See Jer. x. 1—5.

70. "A scarecrow." An effigy of straw or some similar material placed in a hotbed for forcing the growth of melons or cucumbers, in order to scare away birds. Such a contrivance "keeps nothing ;" even the birds discover the imposture. Should, then, reasonable men be deluded by the phantom terrors of stocks and stones, which have no power for good or evil ?

71. "A white thorn." The ancients had a superstition about the whitethorn tree, supposing it to be a safeguard against charms or incantations. Or it may be mentioned as a thorny shrub planted with a view to protect a garden from birds, but found altogether ineffectual for the purpose. Idols were often erected in gardens or orchards, as though they were a defence against marauders (Is. lxx. 3.). Such was the deity called Priapus by the Romans.

"Cast into the dark." Concealed for a short time, but soon detected by the foul odour proceeding from it. So the rottenness of the idols could only be disguised for a while, and would soon be discovered.

72. "From the bright purple ;" literally, "from the purple and the

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they themselves afterward shall be eaten, and shall be a reproach in the country.

73 Better therefore is the just man that hath none idols: for he shall be far from reproach.

“glitter.” As these ornaments fade away or are corrupted, the worthlessness of these blocks of wood or stone becomes more evident. So in Wisd. xiii. 14, the wooden effigy of a beast or reptile is daubed over with red ochre.

“Be eaten.” They shall crumble away through mould or decay, and thus share the fate of their ornaments.

73. “The just man.” For the blindness which makes men the victims of the miserable delusions of idolatry is the consequence of forsaking the way of righteousness. It was through unrighteousness that this judicial blindness came upon them, and their foolish heart was darkened (Rom. i. 21.).

In this verse and ver. 69, the author seems to hesitate in his testimony against idolatry, or to diverge from the sterner teaching of the Canonical Scriptures on the subject. Or it might be a reaction from an excessive abuse of heathen superstitions, from which Christian zeal might learn, by the example of an Apostle (Acts xix. 37,) to refrain.

THE SONG OF THE THREE HOLY CHILDREN,

Which followeth in the third Chapter of DANIEL after this place,—*fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.*—Ver. 23. That which followeth is not in the Hebrew, to wit, *And they walked*—unto these words, *Then Nebuchadnezzar*—ver. 24.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS is the first in point of arrangement of the three additions to the Book Daniel, the second and the third being respectively “the Story of Susanna,” and “of Bel and the Dragon.” These additions are found in the Greek texts (LXX. and Theodotion), in the Old Latin and Vulgate, and in the Syriac and Arabic Versions; but there is little reason to believe that they ever formed part of the original Hebrew text, or that they were derived from Aramaic originals. Probably the Alexandrine translator of the Book Daniel found in existence certain traditions which he worked up into their present shape, and which in process of time came to be considered integral parts of the original. It is not difficult to account for these traditions: they were intended to fill up imaginary blanks, or amplify details. Thus, the Story of Susanna purports to give an instance, otherwise unrecorded, of the wisdom of Daniel when quite young (cp. Dan. i. 17.); the narrative of Bel and the Dragon may be considered another form of the simpler history of Dan. vi., dealing with an event in his old age; the Song of the Three Children expands in prayer and praise the thought and language of Dan. iii. 17.

But though these additions cannot claim the same authenticity as the book to which they are appended, they are yet admirable illustrations of the language of St. Jerome (in whose time they were used in the Church), and of the Sixth Article of the Church of England, which adopts his language: “the Church doth read them for example of life “and instruction of manners.”

“The Song of the Three Children” (on the others, see the *Introductions* to them respectively) is placed by the Greek texts after Dan. iii. 23. In that chapter, Daniel’s three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (or, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; see Dan. i. 7.), are recorded as refusing to worship the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They preferred the death by fire which Babylonian usage frequently assigned to rebellion. They were thrown into the furnace. Then arose the prayer of Azariah (or Azarias, vv. 2—22.); and in answer to it “the angel of the Lord came down . . . and smote the flame “of the fire out of the oven . . . so that the fire touched them not at “all, neither hurt nor troubled them” (vv. 26, 27.). Then that song of praise rose from the hearts of the three (vv. 29, &c.), which, used

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as a hymn in the later Jewish Church, has found a home in the Service-Books of the Church Catholic since the fourth century. It is a paraphrase of Psalm cxlviii. (see *margin. ref.* to the text), summoning "all the works of the Lord," without exception, to praise Him (see the analysis in ver. 28.).

In the older Offices of the Church it was the Canticle sung on Sundays at Lauds (an early Morning Service with fixed Psalms and Canticles); the Church of England adopted it under its Latin name of "Benedicite," and the rubric of the first Prayer-Book of Edward VI. (A.D. 1549.) ordered it to be used in Lent as a responsory to the Old Testament Lesson at the Morning Prayer; but this rubric was removed at the revision in A.D. 1552, and there is now no express order at what season it should be used. By many, however, it is considered more suitable for Lent and Advent than the "Te Deum;" its tone of jubilant adoration being less exalted: and certainly it may appropriately be used on the day that Dan. iii. is read (Sept. 15.), and on days which recite the history of the Creation (Jan. 2, and Septuagesima Sunday).

In this Commentary a few illustrations from scientific discovery, Astronomy, and Natural History, have been adduced side by side with devotional reflections. The former have "a voice" and "a language heard among them," ever testifying to the glory and goodness of our Father in heaven, which it is well at all times to recognise. The student will find these illustrations largely and devoutly handled in the "Benedicite," by Dr. G. C. Child Chaplin. For spiritual profit in the study of this beautiful Canticle the reader may be referred to a little volume, "Seek and Find," by C. Rossetti, and published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, by Whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before Thee for all estates of men in Thy Holy Church, that every member of the same, in his Vocation and Ministry, may truly and godly serve Thee; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

2 Azarias his prayer and confession in the flame, 24 wherewith the Chaldeans about the oven were consumed, but the three children within it were not hurt. 23 The song of the three children in the oven.

AND they walked in the midst of the fire, praising God, and blessing the Lord.

2 Then Azarias stood up, and prayed on this manner; and opening his mouth in the midst of the fire said,

3 Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers: thy name is worthy to be praised and glorified for evermore:

^a Dan. 9. 14. 4 ^a for thou art righteous in all the things that thou hast done to us: yea, true are all thy works, ^b Ps. 25. 10. thy ways are right, and ^b all thy judgments truth.

5 In all the things that thou hast brought upon us, and upon the holy city of our fathers, *even*

2. "Azarias," or Azariah (see Dan. i. 7.), was one of the royal children of Judah, placed by Nebuchadnezzar "over the affairs of the province "of Babylon" (Dan. ii. 49.). His Babylonian name was "Abed-nego," i.e. "Abed-nebo" (= "the servant of Nebo," a god of great renown among the Babylonians, whose name enters also into that of the king, Nebuchadnezzar). Azariah is (Dan. i. 6.) the last-named of the three companions of Daniel, but there is no ground for supposing him to have been the youngest. It may, however, be significant of his deeply religious character, that Azariah (= "whom Jehovah hath helped") should be the spokesman of a prayer (vv. 2—19.) full of memories of help in the past and confident of help in the future.

"In the midst of the fire." See Dan. iii. 6, *Note*. The Cuneiform Inscriptions recount death by burning to have been the punishment accorded by Assur-bani-pal to the rebellious Saul-mugina, King of Babylonia.

3—8. God's attribute of justice is specially brought forward. Sin and iniquity, trespass and disobedience, are the national faults which are named as justly rewarded by national penalties. "We cannot complain of the misfortunes which have happened to the city, or the temple, or to ourselves: our city we have filled with homicide, our temple with idols, and upon our own selves have we brought the worst evils" (*Mai*). Yet is the appeal rightly made to the Lord God of their "fathers" (ver. 12.), and to His promises (ver. 13.). Cp. the teaching of Christ: the repentant sinner is always a son (St. Luke xv. 21, 32.).

4. "Hast done to us." The "us" is emphatic. Allusion to the justice of their own strait is first humbly admitted; then the more general truth is stated (ver. 5.).

The words prefixed to God's "works," "ways," and "judgments" bear evident reference to Dan. iv. 37. Cp. also Ps. xxxiii. 4. Is. xlv. 13. Hos. xiv. 9. Acts xiii. 10. Rev. xv. 3; xvi. 7.

5. "The holy city." As an epithet of Jerusalem, cp. Neh. xi. 1. St. Matt. iv. 5. For "all the things" which came upon the city, see 2 Kings xxiv., xxv., and *marg. ref.*

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

Jerusalem, thou hast executed true judgment: for according to truth and judgment didst thou bring all these things upon us because of our sins.

6 For we have sinned and committed iniquity, departing from thee.

7 In all things have we trespassed, and not obeyed thy commandments, nor kept them, neither done as thou hast commanded us, that it might go well with us.

8 Wherefore all that thou hast brought upon us, and every thing that thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment.

9 And thou didst deliver us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful forsakers of God, and to an unjust king, and the most wicked in all the world.

10 And now we cannot open our mouths, we are become a shame and reproach to thy servants, and to them that worship thee.

11 Yet deliver us not up wholly, for thy name's sake, neither disannul thou thy covenant:

6. "Departing from thee." Not "from the Lord God Almighty," not "from the God of our fathers," but "from Thee." That personal pronoun is selected which brings into prominence strong personal affection, rather than any title descriptive of Divine majesty and greatness.

8. This general statement is defined more precisely in vv. 14, 15.

9. "Forsakers of God." Lit. "apostates," a term true of the Babylonians, in so far as all idolatry is apostasy, rebellion from the true God. The phrase, taken with the epithets "most hateful" and "lawless" (i.e. not recognising *the Law*), is, however, best understood as expressing the writer's strong feelings rather than an accurate definition of Babylonian religious belief.

"An unjust king," &c. This language, partly an exaggeration of Dan. iv. 27, is also partly due to strong Jewish prejudice. To the Jew, "unjust" was the assumption of Divine honours, and "most wicked" the intolerance displayed towards the true believers; but from a Babylonian point of view that assumption was not surprising, and the intolerance but too common.

10. "And now," &c. Rather, "We must keep silence. It is not for us, who are justly punished, to open our mouths."

"We are become." A better reading is, "Shame and reproach" (cp. Is. liv. 4.) "has happened to Thy servants" (to us and the Jews generally).

11. "Deliver us not up wholly," or, "for ever," to our enemies for destruction. Cp. Ezek. xxxvi. 21—24.

"Disannul thy covenant." Man has done, and did this perpetually (cp. Deut. xxxi. 16.); yet man's prayer is that God would not carry

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12 and cause not thy mercy to depart from us, for thy beloved Abraham's sake, for thy servant Isaac's sake, and for thy holy Israel's sake ;

^c Gen. 22. 17.
& 26. 4.

13 to whom thou hast spoken and promised, ^e that thou wouldest multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that lieth upon the sea-shore.

^d Bar. 2. 13.

14 ^d For we, O Lord, are become less than any nation, and be kept under this day in all the world because of our sins.

15 Neither is there at this time prince, or prophet, or leader, or burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place to sacrifice before thee, and to find mercy.

^e Bar. 2. 18.

16 ^e Nevertheless in a contrite heart and an humble spirit let us be accepted.

out His judgment (Lev. xxvi. 44. Num. xv. 31.), however much deserved. Cp. the language of Abraham (Gen. xviii. 23, &c.) and of the Psalmist (Ps. cxxx. 3.).

12. God had caused His "mercy" to "depart" from kings who had ruled over Israel (cp. 1 Chr. xvii. 13) ; hence the appeal is carried farther back to those who had been blessed with God's favour in earlier days, Abraham, Isaac, Israel. The epithets attached to the names of the patriarchs are carefully chosen (cp. Is. xli. 8.). Abraham, usually designated by the A.V. the "friend of God" (e.g. 2 Chr. xx. 7, see *margin. ref.*), is here, and in the Greek Version of the passages in 2 Chr. and Isaiah, called God's "beloved," a more accurate rendering of the word in the Hebrew. From first (Gen. xii. 1, 2.) to last (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.), God's "speech and promise" (ver. 13) with Abraham is that with one "beloved," more than a mere "friend." Israel is "holy," "Thy holy one," in allusion to the change of name (Jacob, the "deceiver," to Israel, the "prince of God"), which betokened also the change of heart and character.

15. The verse probably intimates that "prince, prophet, leader," and priest were not permitted to exercise their respective offices, rather than that those offices had ceased to exist. Cp. Ps. lxxiv. 9. 1 Macc. iv. 46. The "leader" is usually taken to apply to a leader in spiritual things, or teacher. According to the Talmud, the title given to the Jew who was the recognised chief of the exiles, was not one of the titles current in the day of national prosperity, but a new one,— "the Head of the Captivity,"—symbolical of national humiliation.

16. Cp. *margin. ref.*, and Ps. li. 17. God had declared His preference for spiritual over material sacrifice (Ps. xl. 6—8) ; and to this Azariah appeals. The "three children" and God's captive people had no rams, bullocks, and lambs to offer: they offered themselves. The act of the one in giving their bodies to the burning, the act of all in putting their trust in God, is pleaded for acceptance in God's sight. Cp. Heb. x. 4—10.

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17 Like as in the burnt offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs :
^fso let our sacrifice be in thy sight this day, and ^fPs. 51. 17.
grant that we may wholly go after thee : for ^gthey ^gPs. 25. 2, 3.
shall not be confounded that put their trust in thee.

18 And now we follow thee with all our heart, we fear thee, and seek thy face.

19 Put us not to shame : but deal with us after thy lovingkindness, and according to the multitude of thy mercies.

20 Deliver us also according to thy marvellous works, and give glory to thy name, O Lord : and let all them that do thy servants hurt be ashamed ;

21 and let them be confounded ²in all their ²Or, *by thy power and might.*
power and might, and let their strength be broken ;

22 and let them know that thou art Lord, the only God, and glorious over the whole world.

23 And the king's servants, that put them in, ceased not to make the oven hot with ³rosin, pitch, ³Or, *naphtha*,
tow, and small wood ; which is a certain kind of fat and chalky clay, *Plin. lib. 2. cap. 105.*

24 so that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits.

25 And it passed through, and burned those Chaldeans it found about the furnace.

26 But the angel of the Lord came down into

20. "Thy marvellous works." Zedekiah, king of Judah, made use of a corresponding appeal when Nebuchadnezzar was warring against him (Jer. xxi. 2.). The mighty works connected with the deliverance from Egypt and the entrance into the Promised Land were types of deliverance to which devout Israelites naturally turned in trouble, national and personal.

22. "The only God." Nebuchadnezzar had demanded that worship of an image (Dan. iii. 5.), which involved on the part of Jews a breach of the first and second commandments. Azariah's appeal is to the One God, Whose honour he upheld. Cp. Dan. iii. 28, 29.

23. The ingredients for heating the furnace are mentioned here only (cp. Dan. iii. 19.). "Rosin," or rather "naphtha," was a clear combustible petroleum ; "tow" was the coarse part of the stalks of flax or hemp next to the woody bark.

24. "Forty and nine cubits ;" i.e., taking the cubit at 18 in., between 73 ft. and 74 ft. The number (7 × 7) is probably chosen on account of its connection with the sacred number, seven.

26. "The angel of the Lord." Called by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iii. 25.), "a son of the gods" (not, as in A.V., "the Son of God").

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the oven together with Azarias and his fellows, and smote the flame of the fire out of the oven ;

27 and made the midst of the furnace as it had been a ²moist whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them.

28 Then the three, as out of one mouth, praised, glorified, and blessed, God in the furnace, saying,

“Fire” was worshipped as a god by the Babylonians, and Nebuchadnezzar recognised the intervention of the god’s messenger in favour of his intended victims.

In this verse note the theological doctrine, that not men nor angels are the workers of miracles, but God alone : angels are His “ministering spirits” (Heb. i. 7, 14.).

27. Details expanding Dan. iii. 25. As moisture quenches fire, and wind blows it aside, so the angel of the Lord “shook out,” expelled the flame : the fire remained, but its power was, by the will of God, subdued. The words in the original are striking : the centre of the furnace was kept cool by a wind soft as “dew,” which yet made its presence known by its “continuous whistling,” or hissing. Some early Christian writers compare this “whistling wind” with “the mighty rushing wind” which filled the house where the Apostles were sitting on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 2. Cp. St. John iii. 8.), and the fire which purified but did not consume with “the cloven tongues” (of flame) which “sat upon each of them.” Cp. St. John iii. 8.

28, &c. The song of praise and glory opens with six Beatitudes, introductory to the Canticle proper (vv. 35, &c.). These Beatitudes speak of God in His glory ; the Canticle, of all inferior to God in heaven and earth. In this general division into two parts, the whole hymn may be compared with the Lord’s Prayer, which speaks of God first, and man next. The opening Beatitudes should be compared with ver. 3 ; the words “exalted above all” perhaps indicating that events (such as the advent of the angel) had fully illustrated the attributes of God recognised from the first as “worthy to be glorified.”

Notice also the order, development, and appositeness of what is here written of God. He is (1.) the Lord God of our fathers (ver. 12.) ; (2.) His Name is blessed and glorious ; (3.) His dwelling is in the Temple (the heavenly sanctuary) of His holy glory, from whence (4.) He beholdeth the depths (Cp. Ps. cxxxix. 8, 11.), all secret things being open to Him with Whom we have to do. He sitteth upon the cherubim (Ps. lxxx. 1 ; xcix. 1.) ; and that seat is (5.) the glorious throne of His kingdom (Dan. vii. 9 ; Rev. iv. 2, &c.), based upon and firm as (6.) the firmament of heaven.

The chorus of these Beatitudes, “to be praised and glorified for ever,” is marked by the humility of men conscious that they are addressing God ; the chorus of the Canticle, “praise and exalt Him above all “for ever,” is a command as well as an invitation,—a command addressed to God’s creation by men conscious of the wonderful mercies vouchsafed to them.

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29 Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers :
and to be praised and exalted above all for ever.

30 And blessed is thy glorious and holy name :
and to be praised and exalted above all for ever.

31 Blessed art thou in the temple of thine holy
glory : and to be praised and glorified above all
for ever.

32 Blessed art thou that beholdest the depths,
and sittest upon the cherubims : and to be praised
and exalted above all for ever.

33 Blessed art thou on the glorious throne of thy
kingdom : and to be praised and glorified above all
for ever.

34 Blessed art thou in the firmament of heaven :
and above all to be praised and glorified for ever.

35 ^h O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the
Lord : praise and ² exalt him above all for ever.

^h Ps. 103. 22.

² Or, *highly*
exalt : and
so in the
rest.

35, &c. The Canticle may be considered a paraphrase and expansion of Ps. cxlviii. (see *marg. ref.*) ; both hymns being invocations to all creation, in its recognised Hebrew divisions of heaven and earth, to praise the Lord. Of the Canticle, as of the Psalm, it may be said, that while some will take it to be exclusively the utterance of a heart filled with the thought of God, others will also see in it an anticipation of that day in which creation, now "groaning and travailing in pain together," as a just punishment for sins national and individual (vv. 6, 7.), shall be delivered (vv. 11, 20.), and brought into "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 18.).

The Canticle is an appeal to "all the works of the Lord" to unite in praising and highly exalting (see *marg.*) Him for ever. These "works" are : (1.) the heavens, the angels who do God's will, and all that those heavens contain,—waters, powers, sun, moon, and stars (vv. 36—41.) ; (2.) the inanimate "works of the Lord" upon the earth,—showers, dew, winds, &c. (vv. 42—56.) ; (3.) the animate "works," whales, &c. (vv. 57—59.) ; (4.) especially the most glorious of God's animate works,—men ; particularly as a people dedicated to God ("Israel," "priests and servants of the Lord"), both in heaven ("spirits" and souls of the righteous ; see *Note* to ver. 64.) and on earth ("holy" and humble men of heart"), and specially such men as Ananias, &c., the signal instances of God's merciful and delivering power (vv. 60—66.). The last two verses are a final summons to all worshippers, celestial and terrestrial, to bless the God of gods, Whose mercy endureth for ever (vv. 67, 68.).

35. "All ye works of the Lord." Cp. Gen. i. 31. St. John i. 1, 3. As the noblest "work" is less noble than its maker, and God the Creator excels the most excellent of His creatures, therefore is it the duty of every creature by acts of obedience, whether in judgment or in mercy, to render praise to God. Devout reflections upon God's works, founded

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- ⁱ Ps. 148. 4. 36 ⁱ O ye heavens, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.
- ^k Ps. 148. 2. 37 ^k O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.
-

upon a knowledge of the power and goodness displayed in them, will always raise feelings of adoration for the Lord the Creator.

36. Cp. Neh. ix. 6. Eph. iv. 10. Is. lxvi. 1. 1 Kin. xxii. 19. This verse is sometimes put after the next (as in the Prayer-Book), the abode ("heaven") being addressed after its inhabitants ("angels") instead of before. The change does not affect the sense. "The heaven "and heaven of heavens cannot contain" God (1 Kin. viii. 27.); yet is heaven the habitation of His house, and the place where His honour dwelleth.

Heaven is the presence of God, and the presence of God is heaven. Is it heaven to us (Ps. xci. 1.)? And if not, yet whither shall we flee from His presence (Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8.)? Apostles have taught us that there shall be "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 1, 27.); and we believe that heaven is "being with the Lord where He is" (St. John xvii. 24. Cp. St. Luke xxiii. 43. Rev. iii. 21.); words which,—if we believe in the ever-abiding presence of God,—have a present as well as a future significance. What, then, shall fit us to "praise Him for ever" in heaven? The striving to do so on earth (St. Matt. vi. 10.); the making Him now "the Way" (St. John xiv. 6.); the loving Him Who first loved us (1 John iv. 19.); the "beholding, as in a glass, the glory of "the Lord," and so the being "changed into the same image from glory "to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18.).

The heavens suggest to the human mind the grandest symbols of the glory of God. More than any other features of nature, they excite in men admiration and awe. The "Three Children" at Nebuchadnezzar's court, learned as they probably were in Chaldean astronomy, knew nothing in comparison with what science has taught the Christian of to-day. If what they knew heightened with its imagery the opening words of their Song, shall what Christians know find them cold and voiceless in singing God's praise? But if the ever-increasing knowledge of the heavens imparted by astronomy increases in the Christian a sense of God's glory, so also does it bring home to him more and more a sense of the limits of his own mental powers and the littleness of his own world in that great Universe of which it is but a speck. For some deep thoughts on this point, see Ps. viii. 3, &c. Heb. ii. 6.

37. "Angels." God's "ministering spirits" (Heb. i. 14.); one of whom at that moment stood with these singers (vcr. 26.), like unto Him Who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (St. Mark x. 45.); and another shut the mouths of lions (Dan. vi. 22.). Holy joy is mentioned as usual with them (Job xxxviii. 4—7.), and they justify God's ways and judgments so difficult to men (Rev. xvi. 4—7.).

Angels, ever employed in doing God's commandments (Ps. ciii. 20.), exhibited their most loving diligence when ministering to Him Who, being their Creator, was "made lower than themselves for the suffering "of death" (Heb. ii. 9, 10.); they heralded His birth (St. Luke ii. 18, &c.), they "ministered to Him" in the wilderness (St. Matt. iv. 11.),

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38 ¹O all ye waters that be above the heaven, ¹ Ps. 148. 4.
bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all
for ever.

39 O all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the
Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever.

40 ^mO ye sun and moon, bless ye the Lord: ^m Ps. 148. 3.
praise and exalt him above all for ever.

they "strengthened Him in agony" (St. Luke xxii. 43.), they were with Him "taken up into heaven" (Acts i. 11.). The ascended Lord has Himself encouraged His "little ones," whose "angels do always behold "the face of the Father which is in heaven" (St. Matt. xviii. 10.), to an obedience and a service like to that of their guardians. If,—which God grant,—they shall be "accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the "resurrection from the dead," then can they not "die any more, for "they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the "children of the resurrection" (St. Luke xx. 35, 36.).

38. "Waters that be above the heaven." See Gen. i. 7. The writer uses here the common language of his people. By the "heaven," or "firmament," he means the space immediately surrounding the earth, which intervenes between the seas below it and the clouds above it. Thus, at the flood the "windows of heaven" (Gen. vii. 11. Cp. Is. xxiv. 18.) are described as "opened" to permit the "waters above" to pour down upon the earth.

39. "Powers of the Lord." Cp. Col. i. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22. These references and the original text render probable the primary application of the "powers" to "the host of heaven;" but devout students of science have not hesitated to include under the term "powers "of the Lord" those mighty Forces, physical, chymical, and vital, which make their presence felt above, below, around, in the air, in the water, on the earth, and under the earth. Solar and terrestrial gravity, electricity, heat, steam, and (not least) the intellectual power taught of God,—each of these, in their degree, are true "powers of the Lord" (St. Matt. vi. 33. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.).

40. The "sun and moon" are God's "two great lights; the greater "light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night" (Gen. i. 16. Ps. cxxxvi. 7—9.).

"Even to the unaided sense the sun is the summit of God's visible "creation, and pre-eminently the symbol of God Himself; of God the "giver, cherisher, cheerer of life; the luminary of all perceptive beings; "the attractive centre of our system" (*Rossetti*). Here it is addressed first as the central pivot of the solar system, and the "greater light "which rules the day." Viewed from the earth, at a distance of nearly 92,000,000 miles, its disc seems small: in reality, its size is greater than the human mind can at all realise; its diameter is said to be 850,000 miles, and its circumference about 2,671,000 miles. From the photosphere surrounding it, as well as, probably, from the surface of the sun itself, are radiated the heat and light which vivify the planets of the solar system. But also it is addressed as the centre of our religious faith and hope and love; "the Lord God is (our) sun and shield"

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ⁿ Ps. 148. 3.

41 ⁿ O ye stars of heaven, bless ye the Lord :
praise and exalt him above all for ever.

(Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 12.). To the prophet, its light (and that of the moon) was a type of the "everlasting light" which the Lord is to His Church (Is. lx. 19, 20.); and when He came Who is "the light of the world" (St. John ix. 5.), created light bowed before Him transfigured,—His "face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" (St. Matt. xvii. 2.): the dream of Joseph was fulfilled in Jesus (Gen. xxxvii. 9.).

The moon, "the lesser light," is to "rule the night." The sun the earth shares with the other planets, but the moon belongs exclusively to the earth; and though the earth and the moon transmit to each other but little warmth, they cheer the darkness of each other's nights by liberally reflecting the rays which both receive from the sun. What this "lesser light" is to the explorer in the Arctic regions, and to the pilot on the trackless seas, that in a spiritual sense is the light of the Church to the pilgrims of earth in their darkest hours; a "lesser light," indeed, than the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. iv. 2.), yet in very truth "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of God's people Israel" (St. Luke ii. 32.). In the Book of Revelation (xii. 1.) "a great wonder" (sign) is described in heaven. The Church is "clothed with the sun," with all the glory which Divine light sheds upon her; "the moon (is) under her feet," underlying and upholding her whose glory is greater than its own; "upon her head (is) a crown of twelve stars," the twelve tribes of the Old, and the twelve Apostles of the New Covenant. It is the vision of these "powers of the Lord," sun, moon, and stars, encompassing His Bride, ready and presently permitted (Rev. xix. 7.) to "praise and exalt Him above all for ever."

41. It has been reckoned that the number of stars which can be distinguished by the naked eye in both hemispheres is 6,000, a number increased by telescopic aid to 100,000,000, independent of clusters and nebulae. Their distances, magnitudes, and velocities are gauged with a certain approximate accuracy by that scientific power granted by God to man, which reveals to him also the order, design, and law assigning to each its respective position. Light has been called the "voice of the stars," for through light comes to us the knowledge they impart about themselves; and by their light do they "praise and exalt" God, Who is light; but it is also the voice wherewith not the stars only, but also the whole "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork" (Ps. xix. 1.). And this material light is to Christians a symbol of the spiritual light granted to those

. "like stars appearing,
Those before God's throne who stand" (Rev. vii. 13.).

It has further been noticed that,—while the revolutions of our earth shut out from us during the night the sight of the sun, and during the day the sight of the moon,—stars, whether seen or not seen, are always above our horizon. In this, the stars are a type of the world-wide brotherhood of man, of the Catholicity of the Church. And if it was one of this celestial host which led wise men of old to Jesus, "the offspring of

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

42 O every shower and dew, bless ye the Lord :
praise and exalt him above all for ever.

43 °O all ye winds, bless ye the Lord : praise ° Ps. 148. 8.
and exalt him above all for ever.

44 P O ye fire and heat, bless ye the Lord : praise P Ps. 148. 8.
and exalt him above all for ever.

"David, the bright and morning star" (Rev. xxii. 16.), shall we not claim brotherhood with them, and worship Him Who is above all, and yet in all? Blessed is the wisdom of those who watch and wait, pray and work; for they who "turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3.).

42. The frequent reference in this hymn to water in all its forms is natural to men living in lands dependent on the proper supply of "shower," "dew," "fountains," "seas and rivers," to preserve them from periodical droughts. Hence also in Scripture generally the presence of these gifts of God is the type of grace and blessing, promise and reward; and the absence of them a symbol of displeasure and punishment. Cp. this instructive imagery in Deut. xxxii. 2, 3. Ps. lxxii. 6. Prov. xix. 12. Hos. vi. 4. 1 Cor. iii. 6—8.

"We plough the fields, and scatter the good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered by God's Almighty hand;
He sends the snow in Winter, the warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes, and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.
All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above,
Then thank the Lord, oh! thank the Lord for all His love."

And in spiritual things, lest drought come over the soul, may God give us "the dew of heaven," "showers of blessing," the gift of His Holy Spirit whereby to praise Him aright.

43. The wind is frequently spoken of in Scripture as the agent of God's will and pleasure (Gen. viii. 1. Job viii. 2. Is. xi. 15.); and our Lord Himself referred to it as a symbol of the Holy Ghost (John iii. 8.). Further, as the sun is the power which sets in motion the great winds of nature, so did the Son of God proclaim the advent of the Holy Spirit by "the sound of a rushing mighty wind" (Acts ii. 2.). In the spiritual as in the natural world, "He bringeth the wind out of His treasures" (Ps. cxxxv. 7.).

44. Water, air, and fire have, it is true, destructive powers; but in this hymn they are specially addressed as purifying elements, as constructive agents. Heat is truly an universal "power of the Lord," the force of forces. It streams from sun and stars, it has shaped the earth, it ministers daily to the welfare of the human race. In Scripture, the universality of this purifying agent is frequently referred to. God Himself is "like a refiner's fire" (Mal. iii. 2.); fire is one of the instruments with which He "pleads with all flesh" (Is. lxvi. 16.). The singers of this hymn, as they walked through the fire, were not burned (ver. 27. Cp. Is. xliii. 2.); the followers of Christ pass unscathed through the flames of temptation, "baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (St. Matt. iii. 11.); devout minds look forward humbly, yet hopefully,

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

45 O ye winter and summer, bless ye the Lord :
praise and exalt him above all for ever.

46 O ye dews and storms of snow, bless ye the
Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.

47 O ye nights and days, bless ye the Lord : praise
and exalt him above all for ever.

to the day when "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. iii. 13.).

45—51. Some MSS. omit some of these verses, or alter the order. In these notes the arrangement of the A.V. is followed.

45. "Winter and summer," the extremes of the variations of the four seasons, are chosen as representatives of the whole. Unlike in a thousand things, they are alike the creation of God; with differing harmonies, but with one song, they "bless the Lord." Man's life has its summer of health and strength, bodily and intellectual; what shall be the song if a man gain the whole world, and lose his own soul (St. Mark viii. 36)? "The summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. viii. 20.). Man's life has also its winter, when "strong men bow themselves . . . "and desire fails" (Eccles. xii. 3—5.); what shall be the song when "the winter is past" (Song of Sol. ii. 11.), and the rest of death is broken by the call to eternal life? The "herald"-song, the winter's Christmas song, so often sung on earth, to be sung for ever in heaven: "Glory to God in the highest!"

46. "Storms of snow." In the Prayer-Book Version, "frosts." In the text, the appeal is again to extremes of natural phenomena, to the soft dew and to the blinding whirlwind of snow, such as the "tourmente" of the Alps. So among men of diverse character, songs of praise may rise from the meek and humble, from the impetuous and zealous. In the Church of God there is room for both Mary and Martha, John and Peter.

47. "Nights and days," not days and nights; evening and morning (Gen. i. 5.), not morning and evening. This is God's order: first darkness, then light (Gen. i. 3.); first crucifixion, then resurrection; first death, then life. "There is something full of hope, noble, and very consolatory in this sequence, night ending in day; night introducing "to the opportunities and capabilities of day, not day hastening down-wards to the recess and obliteration of night" (*Rossetti*). In the history of God's saints, the night has been often a time when God has "opened the ears of men, and sealed their instruction" (Job xxxiii. 16.); Jacob wrestled then, and triumphed at dawn (Gen. xxxii. 22—31.); Samuel received then his first revelation (1 Sam. iii. 2, &c.), and Solomon his great blessing (1 Kin. iii. 5, &c.). It is a time for revising the past day, for preparing for the next; a time of giving "glory to God for all "the blessings of the light," of prayer "to serve our God when we awake." On the other hand, "day" and day-time are Scriptural expressions for seasons of holy joy; the daily return of light is a daily remembrance of future resurrection. The "day of the Lord" is the "day of salvation," the "day of redemption," and the "day of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. vi. 2. Eph. iv. 30. Phil. i. 6.); "the path of the just" is likened to "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov.

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48 O ye light and darkness, bless ye the Lord :
praise and exalt him above all for ever.

49 O ye ice and cold, bless ye the Lord : praise
and exalt him above all for ever.

50 O ye frost and snow, bless ye the Lord : praise
and exalt him above all for ever.

iv. 18.). And so it is true of things spiritual as of natural phenomena, that "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Ps. xix. 2.).

48. "Light and darkness" are here considered, not as symbolical respectively of good and evil (St. John iii. 19, 20.), but as "both alike to God" (Ps. cxxxix. 12.); as equally the objects of His creation and care (Is. xlv. 5, 7.). Darkness and light are both abodes of God (2 Sam. xxii. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 16.). If the Psalmist celebrates the Lord covering Himself "with light as with a garment" (Ps. civ. 2.), Solomon declares, "The Lord said that He would dwell in the thick darkness" (1 Kin. viii. 12.). His Presence upon the Mercy Seat was in a cloud (Lev. xvi. 2.), and that Mercy Seat within the veil of the Temple was shrouded in unbroken darkness, except on the one annually recurring Day of Atonement.

Light is, as to its essential nature, still a mystery. "God said, Let there be light" (Gen. i. 3.), and our emanation—and undulation—theories are but human explanations of His decree. Though colourless and invisible, light is made up of seven different tints, these again capable of being reduced to three. The sun is the great fountain of light, and with the co-operation of the atmosphere the perfect illumination of our earth is effected, and all that exists upon the earth lives. These facts of nature are parables of the spiritual world. "The Lord is our light and salvation" (Ps. xxvii. 1. St. John viii. 12.), and in His light shall we see light. Light and darkness encompass the Church militant here on earth; light without darkness belongs only to the Church triumphant in heaven (Rev. xxii. 5.); yet even now "the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Is. ix. 2. St. Matt. iv. 12—16.),—even Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the fountain and source of light. He is the Golden Candlestick with its seven lights, the seven gifts of One Holy Spirit; One in Three, yet Three in One God, Creator, and Giver of Light.

49, 50. "Ice and cold . . . frost and snow," are figures to most of us of what is bleak and cheerless, destitute of life, or ready to melt away. Not so to the writer of this hymn; he appeals to the services which they render to Nature, to their bracing and invigorating, refreshing and preserving powers. Cold brings sleep to the animal and vegetable world; frost crumbles the hard clods, and snow covers and protects the tender mountain plants. A similar beneficent use for spiritual ends is recorded in Scripture of these "powers." "Good news from a far country," Gospel-tidings of and from the kingdom of heaven, is "as cold waters to a thirsty soul;" the "faithful messenger" who brings them braces and invigorates as "the cold of snow" (Prov. xxv. 13, 25.). Snow is the symbol of spiritual purification, "sins as scarlet shall be white as snow" (Is. i. 18. Ps. li. 7.); it alone was exquisite enough to express

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51 O ye lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord :
praise and exalt him above all for ever.

52 O let the earth bless the Lord : praise and
exalt him above all for ever.

the shining purity of the raiment of our transfigured Lord (St. Mark ix. 3.). The most perfect service which Christians can render to the "little ones" of Christ finds its highest illustration in the refreshing "cup of cold water" (St. Matt. x. 42.).

51. "Lightnings and clouds" were, to one residing in warm climates, frequently significant of forerunners of blessing. In September, "lightnings for the rain" (Ps. cxxxv. 7.) were signs that the scorching heat was past, and the wished-for rains imminent. Hence (as here) the thunderstorm, notwithstanding the dread and the peril sometimes attending it, is a "power of the Lord," which praises Him; it clears and purifies the air. And, not without reason, does this hymn associate lightning with clouds. "Out of the clouds comes the danger,—out of the clouds comes the water which helps to avert it" (*Chaplin*). Moist air is a good conductor; every drop of rain which falls from the thunder-cloud brings down the electricity in safety to the ground. The Scriptural association of these "powers" is not less significant of blessing. To Israel a cloud indicated, if it veiled, the Presence of God which was with His people in their exodus, and dwelt in the Tabernacle (Exod. xiii. 21; xl. 34; 1 Kin. viii. 10.); out of the cloud which overshadowed the man Christ Jesus proceeded the Voice at the Transfiguration (St. Matt. xvii. 1—5. Cp. also St. Luke iii. 21, 22.); "a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts i. 9.) in the hour of Ascension; and in the day of His second Advent this same Jesus "cometh with clouds" (Rev. i. 7.). Lightning, in its turn, is the metaphor used to describe the long wished-for but sudden, the brilliant yet awful return of Christ (St. Matt. xxiv. 27.); "lightnings, thunders, and voices" are the glorious if terrible sounds issuing from the throne and temple of God (Rev. iv. 5; xi. 19.).

52. "The earth" as a whole is first summoned to join the chorus; the following verses appeal to its inanimate and animate parts in succession. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Ps. xxiv. 1.). Men, however variously impressed by what is grand and wild, or what is gentle and beautiful among the external features of our globe, unite in admitting the truth of the Psalmist's words; yet is this external and visible adornment but the casket of internal and invisible treasure. "Earth is a fruitful mother, and is filled with the treasures of God's love to man" (*Chaplin*). Stone and marble, metal and mineral, coal and oil, flower and fruit, with countless other gifts, are enshrined in her bosom; out of her "fulness" God ministers to human happiness. But also "the world (is the Lord's), and they that dwell therein" (Ps. xxiv. 1.). This earth is the sphere of our work and probation. May "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (St. Matt. vi. 10.)! The human kingdom of God is, according to Christ's parable, "to spring and grow up," men know not how, bringing forth fruit and ripening to the harvest (St. Mark iv. 26—29.); its members are to be "faithful," not "slothful," servants (St. Matt. xxv. 14, &c.), bearing indeed "the

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

53 O ye mountains and little hills, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever. Ps. 148. 9.

54 O all ye things that grow on the earth, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.

"image of the earthy," but conscious that, God helping them, they "shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 4, 9.); they are to "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13.).

53. "Mountains and hills" are in nature and in Scripture symbolical of what is grand and noble, beneficent and holy. In the world of nature, mountains act as loadstones to the clouds, and draw from them the blessings of the rains; they form the great watersheds of the earth, and from their frozen summits send forth the streams which dispense fertility; their climate braces and re-invigorates the weary and feeble. In Scripture, "the everlasting hills" are the type of God's illimitable blessings (Gen. xlix. 26.); the "mountain" is the symbol of the refuge in the Lord to which the soul should flee (Ps. xi. 1.). Ararat and Moriah, Gerizim and Ebal, Sinai and Calvary, the Mount of Transfiguration and the Mount of Ascension, are types of and recall spiritual gifts,—safety and salvation, law and redemption, purity on earth and the holiness which leads to God. With the instinct of holy fear the spirit asks, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" and answers itself (Ps. xxiv. 3, &c.); with the instinct of holy faith the soul affirms, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help" (Ps. cxxi. 1.). Yea, "The mountains shall bring peace, and the little hills righteousness unto the people" (Ps. lxxii. 3, Prayer-Book Version).

54. "All ye things that grow on the earth." Defined more precisely in the Prayer-Book Version as "all green things upon the earth;" i.e. the whole vegetable creation, from the mammoth trees of California to the dwarf lichen of the Arctic regions. "Plants give us houses for shelter, ships for commerce, and medicines with which to combat disease" (*Chaplin*). Flax and cotton clothe men, wheat and other cereals feed them; the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics shelters the inhabitants from the white glare of the scorching sun; the thinly-scattered sea-reed and broom protect the denizens of the low-lying coastlands from sand and sea. Summer and Winter, Spring and Autumn, North and South, East and West,—everywhere, and at all seasons,—the beauty, utility, and diversity of plant and tree, flower and fruit, are voices of the earth praising Him of Whose creative wisdom they are evidential proofs. In the Bible, the "growth on the earth," if sometimes emblematic of the brevity and transitoriness of human life, is frequently typical of prolific spiritual vigour (Ps. lxxii. 16. Is. xlv. 4.). In Eden there grew "every tree pleasant to the sight, and good for food" (Gen. ii. 9.); and the beauteous aspect of vegetation is everywhere the theme of the writer of "The Song of Songs." The Messiah is frequently spoken of in language drawn from the "things that grow on the earth." He was "a rod out of the stem of Jesse, a branch (which grows) out of his roots" (Is. xi. 1.); he grew up before the Lord "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground" (Is. liii. 2.). Devout minds have

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

55 O ye fountains, bless ye the Lord : praise and
exalt him above all for ever.

identified Him with the corn and wine of type (Gen. xiv. 18.), and psalm (lxxii. 16; civ. 14, 15.), and prophecy (Zech. ix. 16, 17.); with the rod of Aaron (Num. xvii. 8.), and with the corn of wheat, which, "if it die, bringeth forth much fruit" (St. John xii. 24.). Our Lord Jesus Christ frequently illustrated His teaching from the plant-life around Him: flowers of the field, lilies, wheat and tares, seed-sowing, fruit-bearing, and harvest-time, are referred to in the parables of One Who used the figure of the vine and its branches to express the indissoluble union necessary between Himself and His followers (St. John xv. 1, &c.). Shall that union be ours in the day when the Beloved shall call, "The winter is past . . . the flowers appear on the earth; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise . . . and come away" (Song of Songs ii. 11—13.)? Blessed are we if there be found in our lives the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22.); if our hope and trust is in the Lord, and our delight in His law; for of such it is written, "He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit" (Jer. xvii. 7, 8. Ps. i. 2, 3.).

55. "Fountains." Prayer-Book Version, "wells." In the East, during the "dry" season, people are dependent upon their wells in a degree quite unknown to the inhabitants of the Western world. Wells give their names to districts; their presence is attended by fruitfulness, and barrenness is a sure sign of their absence; hence in such a hymn as this their existence is recorded as a cause of the deepest thankfulness. In Holy Scripture the mention of "fountains" or "wells" illustrates both their importance and their blessing (see Gen. xxvi. 18—22; xxix. 2, 3.); in a spiritual sense God is the "fountain of life," the "fountain of living waters" (Ps. xxxvi. 9. Jer. ii. 13.); His people are encouraged to "draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Is. xii. 3.). As Jesus sat by Jacob's well, He offered to the woman of Samaria what should be in her "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (St. John iv. 14. Cp. vii. 37.). He is "the fountain opened (to men) for sin and uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1.); He it is Who has "washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. i. 5.), and will "give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi. 6.). Not inaptly has it been said: "The Christian starts from a well, the blessed water of baptism; refreshment as of water goes with him, the copious dews and showers of grace; his own tears of sorrow for sin help to fill the pools (Ps. lxxxiv. 6.); Christ, the spiritual Rock, follows him, of Whom he drinks (1 Cor. x. 4.), and while drinking he yet is thirsty; sometimes the loving Lord leads him beside still waters" (Ps. xxiii. 2, 'waters of comfort,' Prayer-Book Version); sometimes "through deep waters, which yet cannot drown him (Is. xliii. 2.); yea, he rejoices amid their roar and swelling" (*Rossetti*). For, apart from their turmoil, "there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God" (Ps. xlv. 4.), and to that city, the "house with many mansions," the Christian is being wafted as to his home.

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

56 O ye seas and rivers, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.

57 O ye whales, and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.

58 ¹ O all ye fowls of the ² air, bless ye the Lord : ¹ Ps. 148. 10.
praise and exalt him above all for ever. ² Gr. heaven.

56. "Seas and rivers;" or, "floods" (Prayer-Book Version). "They" "that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;" "these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep" (Ps. cvii. 23, 24.). The waters are not considered as the emblem of unrest, but as "storehouses" (Ps. xxxiii. 7.) of God's blessings. The grand water-circulation of the globe, from the poles to the equator, and back again to the poles, the great gulf-stream, whose source is the Gulf of Mexico and whose mouth is in the Arctic seas, and thousands of subsidiary currents, have their appointed work in the development and support of life, in the moderation of extremes of temperature over the globe, in the distribution and assistance of trade and commerce, of civilisation and religion. The great rivers of the earth are also its "floods," and the relative adjustment to each other of river and ocean is a marvellous illustration of the Creator's wisdom. Nothing can be more exact than the language of Eccles. i. 7. The ocean-vapour falls upon the earth in rain, and finds its way again to its parent sea; blessings accompany it at every stage: "without the ocean, there would be no rain; without rain, no fertile land; without fertile land, no plants;—and without plants, no animals" (*Chaplin*). In spiritual things, "seas" and "rivers" are types of blessings. The Lord's command, "Launch out into the deep" (St. Luke v. 4.), is, when obeyed, accompanied by spiritual insight into the works and wonders of the Lord, Who "maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters" (Is. xliii. 16.). The river Jordan, sanctified by the baptism of God's well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, has remained to Christians the type of water sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin, and in which children, when baptized, become the recipients of the fulness of God's grace.

57. "Whales" may be taken as representative of the "leviathans" of the deep; "all that move in the waters" as a phrase including aquatic birds and fishes, algæ and microscopic diatoms, not one of which but has its purpose with God; its existence, or its instinct, or its power, is its hymn of praise to the Creator (Job xii. 7, 8.). In this Song of the Three Children, the whale would be also the emblem of a deliverance similar to that accorded to the prophet Jonah (i., ii.); and our Lord has taught us to see in that deliverance a type of His own resurrection, and, through His, of ours (St. Matt. xii. 40.).

58. The song of birds is not only a language among themselves, it is the voice with which they "praise and exalt" their Maker, and bring pure enjoyment to men. Their plumage, structure, and eggs are beautiful proofs of creative design; their names are in some instances (e.g. that of the "stork") synonyms for the affection and devotion they exhibit for their young; they scatter and sow seeds over the earth; they keep under the insect-life which might ravage it. The birds of Scripture

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

- * Ps. 148. 10. 59 * O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord:
praise and exalt him above all for ever.
- 60 O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord:
praise and exalt him above all for ever.
-

are often God's messengers of mercy; witness the raven and dove, which proclaimed the cessation of the flood to Noah (Gen. viii. 6—12.), and the ravens which brought bread and meat to Elijah (1 Kin. xvii. 2—6.). They are frequently alluded to in our Lord's teaching. The "fowls of the air" ("the ravens," St. Luke xii. 24.), which "sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns," and yet are fed by our Heavenly Father (St. Matt. vi. 26.), are types to us of trust in God for our daily bread; the "sparrows," cared for individually, suggest at least His like care for those "of more value than many sparrows" (St. Matt. x. 29, 31.); the hen, watching over her brood, is a simile representing His loving yearning over unloving and unwilling children (St. Luke xiii. 34.). And for the loving and obedient, God has declared His promise in words which owe their beauty and force to the king of birds: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Is. xl. 31.).

59. "Beasts and cattle" correspond generally to wild and domestic animals. The former celebrate "the ways of God" (Job xl. 19.); the latter, His "blessings" to men (cp. Gen. xxx. 27—30.). It is the glory of this branch of Natural History to point the way, through the perfection of the creature, to the greater perfection of the Creator (Job xxxv. 11.). Ants and conies, locusts and spiders, "four things which are little upon the earth," are to men examples of unobtrusive yet exceeding wisdom (Prov. xxx. 24—28.); the mightiest and the meekest of fourfooted animals receive a crown of dignity in those titles of the Son of God,—the Lion of Judah, and the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world (Rev. v. 5, 6. St. John i. 29, 36.). The aspirations of Saviour and saved reach forward to the hour when the Good Shepherd "shall feed His flock and gather the lambs," and "there shall be one fold" (Is. xl. 11. St. John x. 1—16.).

60. With this verse begins the appeal to mankind to join the chorus which heavenly powers and the inanimate and (as compared with man) irrational powers of the earth had already sung. There is a kind of ascending scale in the terms descriptive of the human race; its lowest stage is the "children of men," its highest "all that worship God" (ver. 68.). Many commentators take the "children of men" in contrast with "Israel" (ver. 61.), and as signifying specially those "Gentiles," which, having not the Law, did by nature the things contained in the Law" (Rom. ii. 14.). Historical examples of such natural rectitude would be, as known to the "Three Children," Abimelech (Gen. xx. 5.), the Pharaoh of Joseph's day (Gen. xli. 38; xlvii. 22.), the daughter of Pharaoh who adopted Moses (Exod. ii. 5—10.), Jethro the Midianite (Exod. xviii. 17—23.), Rahab (cp. Heb. xi. 31.), Ruth, Hiram of Tyre (1 Kin. v.), the widow of Zarephath (1 Kin. xvii. 8—24.), Naaman the Syrian (2 Kin. v.); and they might look forward to the day when kings should be the nursing fathers (e.g. Cyrus, Is. xlv. 28; Darius, Ezra vi.; Artaxerxes, Neh. ii.), and queens the nursing mothers of God's people

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

61 O Israel, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for ever.

62 'O ye priests of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : ' Ps. 134. 1. praise and exalt him above all for ever.

Israel (Is. xlix. 23.). With the New Testament in our hands, it is possible for us to see other instances of God's hand leading those outside the family of Israel. The perseverance of the wise men from the East (St. Matt. ii.), the repentance of the woman of Samaria (St. John iv.), the indomitable hope of the Syrophenician mother (St. Matt. xv. 21, &c.), the earnestness of the Greek pilgrims who craved to "see Jesus" (St. John xii. 21.), the beautiful life of Cornelius the centurion (Acts x. 2.), —what are these, and many other instances, but exemplifications of the truth, "Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matt. viii. 11. Cp. Ps. xxxvi. 7.)?

61. "Israel" represents here the Church of the Old Covenant; it is the God-given designation of the chosen people. It has also an application wider than and beyond those who, "having obtained a good report through faith, (yet) received not the promise" (Heb. xi. 23.). The Church of the New Covenant is the Israel of God, the Church founded by Jesus Christ, the Prince Who had power with God and men (Gen. xxxii. 28.). The Church, thus addressed, is invited to bless the Lord in the Song of Moses, and in the Song of the Lamb (Rev. xv. 3.). As members of the Church, each one of us has his motto, "Let Israel do valiantly" (cp. Num. xxiv. 18.).

62. When Moses went up the mount to God, the promise was given, conditional upon obedience, "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, an holy nation" (Exod. xix. 6.); and in the Revelation of St. John, "Jesus Christ hath made of those, washed from their sins in His own blood, kings and priests unto God and His Father" (Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 10.); i.e. the purity, holiness, and faithfulness attributed to and expected of priests shall be the characteristic virtues, not of a class, but of all God's people. But that first promise was frustrated by disobedience, and the future is still in God's hands. In the meanwhile, and as understood by the writer of this hymn, there are men set apart, ordained to offer gifts according to the Law, accomplishing the service of God (cp. Heb. viii. 3, 4; ix. 6, and *reff.*). High priest, priests, and Levites were names for these men in the Jewish Church. Kings prayed for them, "Let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation" (2 Chr. vi. 41; cp. xxiv. 6; xxix. 5, 11.); prophets reminded them, "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and (men) should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (Mal. ii. 7, and *reff.*). Bishops, priests, and deacons are the names adopted by the Church from the earliest days of Christianity. Apostles have taught them that their duties are the duties of "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God;" their lives the lives of "ensamples to the flock" (1 Cor. iv. 1. 1 Pet. v. 3. See 1 Tim. iii. 1—7.); the branches of the Church Catholic have ever used prayers for "all those called to any office and administration in the same, that such might faithfully serve before God, to the glory of His great name, and the benefit of His Holy Church"

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

63 O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord :
praise and exalt him above all for ever.

64 O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless
ye the Lord : praise and exalt him above all for
ever.

(*Ember-Week Collect*). Yet what can make any man sufficient for these holy functions, able "to bless the Lord?" Nothing so much as the thought of the teaching and example of our great High Priest, "holy, "harmless, undefiled . . . consecrated for ever" (Heb. vii. 26, &c.).

63. "Servants" may be, primarily, and as meant in this hymn, those who held and performed some sacred service connected with the Temple; and in that sense the verse is ever needed to remind every subordinate officer in the church,—churchwardens and sidesmen, organist and choir, vergers and caretakers, lay-readers and mission-women, sextons and grave-diggers,—how holy and solemn is their office. But the application of the term is also of the widest extent. It should be true of all religious persons, that "as the eyes of servants look unto "the hand of their masters . . . so our eyes wait upon the Lord our "God" (Ps. cxliii. 2.). "Servant" (lit. "slave") of God is a title borne by the noblest among the Saints of the Old and New Testaments,—by Moses (1 Chr. vi. 49.), by Daniel (Dan. vi. 20.), by St. Peter (2 Pet. i. 1.), St. James (James i. 1.), St. John (Rev. i. 1.), St. Jude (Jude 1.), and St. Paul (Tit. i. 1. Rom. i. 1.); it is sanctified for ever to Christians as the name which designates at once the humility and the greatness of One nobler than the noblest (St. Luke xxii. 27. Phil. ii. 7.). What more significant title can Christians wish for themselves than that of "servants of God" (2 Pet. ii. 16.)? If at best we are but "unprofitable "servants" (St. Luke xvii. 10.), yet if our best be given and done, "this "is the (present) heritage of the servants of the Lord; no weapon that "is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise "against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn" (Is. liv. 17.). The future is even more "blessed" to those "servants whom the Lord, when He "cometh, shall find watching" (St. Luke xii. 37.). "Where I am," said Jesus, "there shall My servant be, . . . him will My Father honour" (St. John xii. 26.); and the vision of that honour has been recorded by the disciple, the servant, the friend whom Jesus loved (Rev. xxxii. 3—5.).

64. The "spirits and souls of the righteous" are rightly referred, in the first instance, to the living righteous. The analogy of vv. 63, 65, seems to require this. Their "spirits and souls" represent the two spiritual parts of their being (cp. Heb. iv. 12. 1 Thess. v. 23.). We need not shrink from applying the epithet "righteous" to the living in the sense in which it was applied by this writer. The Old Testament Scriptures abound with passages from Lawgiver, Psalmist, and Prophet, attesting and applauding the righteousness of such as Abel, Noah, Abraham, David, and all who are distinguished broadly by this mark from the wicked and sinners.

But the Church, by her use of this hymn, permits,—in the next place,—an application of these words (cp. Heb. xii. 22—24.) to those who have put off the burden of the flesh, "the great multitude . . . standing "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and

SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

65 O ye ²holy and humble men of heart, bless ²Or, *saints*.
ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for
ever.

66 O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the
Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever: for
he hath delivered us from ³hell, and saved us from ³Or, *the grave*.

"palms in their hands" (Rev. vii. 9.). If the revelations and conceptions of things after death remain, in the New as in the Old Testament, comparatively few, yet has the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23.), taught us the truth concerning the future,—*"in Christ shall all be made alive,"*—which makes death the gate of life. Immortality was a *hope* to the Patriarch, Psalmist, and Prophet (Job xix. 25—27. Cp. St. Matt. xxii. 32. Ps. xlix. 15. Is. xxvi. 19. Hos. xiii. 14.); it is a *fact* to the Christian: "them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. iv. 14.) is the matured conviction of one who saw the saint "fall asleep" in the Lord (Acts vii. 55, 56, 60.). Apostle and saint had learnt and believed it from the first-begotten of the dead,—*"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"* (St. Luke xxiii. 43. Cp. Rev. xiv. 13.).

65. The word translated "*holy*" is usually rendered "*saints*" (see *marg.*) in the Psalms and in the Apocrypha (e.g. Wisd. xviii. 1, 5, 9.); and the difficulty sometimes felt in applying such an epithet to men is met by the recollection that the word does not assert for them "*holiness*" in the same sense as is assigned to God. The word "*holy*" is, in a lower sense, often equivalent to "*hallowed*" (e.g. Exod. xix. 6. Cp. 2 Pet. ii. 9.).

The "*humble men of heart*" are by some taken to signify, not the lowly (cp. St. Matt. xi. 29.), but men humbled, of a broken heart (cp. ver. 16, and Eccus. xxv. 22.); and therefore an epithet descriptive of the exiled Jews. In the case of such, praise is possible, when the Master's call has been welcomed, and His "*rest*" accepted (St. Matt. xi. 28—30.).

But if there be in these verses an ascending scale of human singers of God's praise (see ver. 60, *Note*), we need not refuse to extend the application of this verse beyond the above limits. "*Holiness*" must be ours, for without it "*no man shall see the Lord*" (Heb. xii. 14. Cp. Phil. iv. 8.), and that kind and degree of holiness which is ever joined with humility of heart (Col. iii. 11, 12.). All that is best and most spiritual within us yearns after that holiness which is only learnt of Him Who was "*meek and lowly in heart.*" Holy humility was once exemplified on earth in His human life; and the imitation of that example can alone fit us for the praise of "the high and lofty One Who inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy," and yet "*dwelleth in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit*" (Is. lvii. 15.).

66. "*Ananias, Azarias, and Misael,*" may be said to represent, in some sort, the various classes of men alluded to in the previous verses. Among "*children of men*" they were "*fairer*" than others, without "*blemish,*" and "*well-favoured;*" and God had given them "*know-*

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the hand of death, and delivered us out of the midst of the furnace *and* burning flame: even out of the midst of the fire hath he delivered us.

“Ps. 136. 1. 67 ^u O give thanks unto the Lord, because he is gracious: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

68 O all ye that worship the Lord, bless the God of gods, praise him, and give him thanks: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

“ledge and skill in all learning and wisdom” (Dan. i. 4, 15, 17, 20.). As true “Israelites,” they would not defile themselves with the king’s meats, nor bow before his idols (Dan. i. 8—16; iii. 18.). They were “priests” in the highest sense (Exod. xix. 6.), and their sacrifice was the sacrifice of themselves (ver. 17.). They were “servants of the “Lord” in their obedience to His command (Exod. xx. 5.), and in their trust in His promise (Is. xliii. 2.); this was a title which Nebuchadnezzar himself allowed to them (Dan. iii. 26). As “righteous” men, they believed that whatever might happen to the body, their “spirits” and souls” were safe with Him Who gave them (Eccles. xii. 7. Job xii. 10.): as “holy” men, their hearts were full of confidence (vv. 18—22.), based upon the “humility” which preceded it (ver. 2, &c.). It is the glory of these men, by their obedience and faith, to be types of Him Who “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. ii. 8.), and “crying unto Him that was able to save Him from “death, was heard” (Heb. v. 7.). They are examples to us, in our hour of sore distress, to “glorify the Lord in the fires” (Is. xxiv. 15.).

The Prayer-Book Version of this hymn stops at the words “for ever,” and closes with that Doxology to the Holy Trinity which gives to the whole a Christian character as well as conclusion. The text recites the special reason why these three men should “praise and exalt God “above all for ever.”

67. “O give thanks;” rather, “Confess” (with thanksgiving). “Gracious” is, in the original, the same word as so often translates the Hebrew for “good,”—e.g. “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Prayer-Book Version, “gracious”); “blessed is the man that trusteth “in Him.” This and the next verse are reminiscences of Ps. cxxxvi. 1—3.

What termination to this noble hymn more exhaustive can be conceived than the appeal to “all” worshippers? The best texts omit “the Lord;” and the appeal thus includes those who, like the courtiers of Nebuchadnezzar, worshipped amiss. “All” are summoned, in heaven and in earth, sons of God and sons of men, what is highest among angelic powers, what is noblest in uninformed heathen nature, what is humblest (and therefore greatest) in informed religious men: “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord” (Ps. cl. 6.).

THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA,

Set apart from the beginning of *Daniel*, because it is not in the Hebrew, as neither the Narration of ^a*Bel and the Dragon*.

INTRODUCTION.

THE History of Susanna, called also "The Judgment of Daniel," is usually placed in the Manuscripts at the beginning of the Book of Daniel, its contents purporting to refer to what occurred when the future prophet was still very young. The LXX. and Vulgate Versions place it after chap. xii. of the Canonical Book. It was originally written in Greek (cp. the play on words in vv. 54, 55, 58, 59.); and the text of Theodotion, simpler and less elaborate than that of the LXX., has been generally followed by modern Versions.

The question of the canonical authority of the work formed the subject of a correspondence, in early times, between Origen and Africanus;^b and the answer of the former has usually been considered insufficient to meet the objections of the latter. The facts underlying the story are in themselves probable; but the manner in which they are presented, and the evident tendency of the writer to illustrate the significance of the name "Daniel" (God is my judge), and aggrandise his reputation, have, together with other reasons, indisposed critics to accept the narrative as historically true.

The narrative itself is full of "exquisite thoughts" (*Origen*); and the encouragement to the pure, and the warning to the impure, are as applicable in the present day as in the past (see ver. 64, *Note*). The saintly Hippolytus (died c. A.D. 235.) allegorised the history. Susanna, the chaste and pure, was a figure of the Church of Christ, the Bride of the Lamb; Joacim, her husband, a type of Christ Himself; the garden prefigured the calling of the Saints, planted in the Church like fruitful trees. Babylon was the type of the world; and the two elders were the types of those who plotted against the Church, viz. the Gentiles, and they of the circumcision. Though these did not agree with each other, yet Satan working in each united them in the desire to corrupt the Church, and, failing that, in afflicting and persecuting her. But in the end virtue triumphs. The Church, though sore oppressed, has but to be faithful as Susanna. Her cry, "How long, O Lord, how long?" is answered. Daniels arise; Christ is with His Church always, even unto the end of the world (St. Matt. xxviii. 20.).

^a Gr. *Bel's Dragon*.

^b The English reader will find it in | Clark's *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*,

| X., pp. 369—387.

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16 *Two judges hide themselves in the garden of Susanna to have their pleasure of her: 28 which when they could not obtain, they accuse and cause her to be condemned for adultery: 46 but Daniel examineth the matter again, and findeth the two judges false.*

THERE dwelt a man in Babylon, called Joacim :
2 and he took a wife, whose name was Susanna,
the daughter of Chelcias, a very fair woman, and
one that feared the Lord.

3 Her parents also were righteous, and taught
their daughter according to the law of Moses.

4 Now Joacim was a great rich man, and had a
fair garden joining unto his house: and to him
resorted the Jews; because he was more honourable
than all others.

5 The same year were appointed two of the an-
cients of the people to be judges, such as the Lord

1. "Joacim." Not the same as "Jehoiachin, king of Judah," taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kin. xxiv. 15.), and released from prison by Evil-Merodach (2 Kin. xxv. 27, &c.), but a wealthy exile, "more honourable than all others" (ver. 4.), and in whose house (according to tradition) the synagogue was held.

2. "Susanna," or, the "lily," was also the name of one of the women who ministered to our Lord of their substance (St. Luke viii. 3). Chelcias, or Hilkiah (= "the portion of the Lord"), has been identified by tradition with the brother of the prophet Jeremiah, and with the priest who found the copy of the Law in the Temple in the reign of king Josiah (2 Kin. xxii. 8.). Such identifications are intelligible, but not necessarily accurate.

"A very fair woman, and one that feared the Lord." Beauty of body and beauty of mind were found united in Susanna: she owed much to the training of her early life (ver. 3.). "By the fruit produced, is the tree easily known. Men who are godly and zealous for the Law become the parents of children worthy of God. Such a child was he (Daniel), who became a prophet and witness of Christ; and such was she (Susanna), who was found chaste and faithful in Babylon,—whose honour and chastity were the occasion of the manifestation of the blessed Daniel as a prophet" (*Hippolytus*).

4. "A fair garden;" lit. "a paradise," a word usually considered to be of Persian origin, and signifying a walled enclosure of large extent, ornamented with trees, and (often) containing wild animals. Here (as in Song of Songs iv. 13.), the word may be taken in the less extensive sense of the Authorised Version.

The character of Joacim is, that of a man rich in this world's goods, and richer still in the honour and esteem he received from others. Cp. the character of Job (xxix.).

5. "Two of the ancients of the people." For the phrase, cp. Ezra iii. 12. Is. iii. 14. Jer. xix. 1. Ezek. vii. 26; viii. 11. Jewish tradition (adopted also by Origen) identified these two men with the

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spake of, that wickedness came from Babylon from ancient judges, who seemed to govern the people.

6 These kept much at Joacim's house: and all that had any suits in law came unto them.

7 Now when the people departed away at noon, Susanna went into her husband's garden to walk.

8 And the two elders saw her going in every day, and walking; so that their lust was inflamed toward her.

9 And they perverted their own mind, and turned away their eyes, that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments.

Ahab and Zedekiah burned by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxix. 22.), two "lying" prophets, and notorious for their immorality; but the statement of this book, that they were "judges," not prophets, and the nature of their death (by stoning, ver. 62.), contradict such identification. Others identify them with Amid (cp. 1 Esdr. v. 20.) and Anid.

"Such as the Lord spake of," &c. The quotation which follows does not occur in the Canonical Books in so many words; but there is probably a reference to Jer. xxix. 23. The character of these men is self-evident from the narrative; the special features, however, of each are noted by Daniel (vv. 52—57.).

"Who seemed to govern." Either, to others they seemed to be proper pilots at the helm (see the words in the original), while in reality, they made shipwreck of those who trusted themselves to them; or, to themselves (i.e. in their own opinion) they seemed, &c. If the words be taken in the latter sense, cp. 1 Cor. x. 12. Gal. vi. 3.

6. In days of prosperity, and in their own land, "suits" among the Israelites were heard, and judgment given, "in the gate," or open space in the front of the gate of the city (cp. Ruth iv. and *reff.*); there is reason to believe that, as described here, judicial processes and investigations were conducted in Babylonia in houses (see *Records of the Past*, XI., pp. 99—104.).

9. Cp. our Lord's advice, St. Matt. v. 28. "To turn away the eyes "from heaven," i.e. from God, is, in Biblical language, contrasted with "to set the face unto the Lord God" (cp. Dan. ix. 3.); the latter act implies willing trust and obedience, the former willing avoidance and disobedience. "Just judgment" would bid men with the passions of these judges "remember" the seventh commandment.

The verses which follow, if descriptive of a special sin, indicate also the subtler processes by which sin of any kind masters those who will not master it. On the one hand, there is the being "**ashamed**" of sin; a feeling which may, by God's help and in answer to prayer, lead to the determination to conquer the sin. On the other, there is the toying and trifling with it which presently leads to the "**watching diligently from day to day**" for an opportunity of indulging the sin. Let the Christian remember the Lord's Prayer: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

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10 And albeit they both were wounded with her love, yet durst not one shew another his grief.

11 For they were ashamed to declare their lust, that they desired to have to do with her.

12 Yet they watched diligently from day to day to see her.

13 And the one said to the other, Let us now go home: for it is dinner time.

14 So when they were gone out, they parted the one from the other, and turning back again they came to the same place; and after that they had asked one another the cause, they acknowledged their lust: then appointed they a time both together, when they might find her alone.

15 And it fell out, as they watched a fit time, she went in ¹as before with two maids only, and she was desirous to wash herself in the garden: for it was hot.

¹ Gr. as
yesterday
and the
day before.

16 And there was no body there save the two elders, that had hid themselves, and watched her.

17 Then she said to her maids, Bring me oil and washing balls, and shut the garden doors, that I may wash me.

18 And they did as she bade them, and shut the garden doors, and went out themselves at ²privy doors to fetch the things that she had commanded them: but they saw not the elders, because they were hid.

² Or,
side doors.

19 Now when the maids were gone forth, the two elders rose up, and ran unto her, saying,

14. "After that they had asked one another the cause," &c. Thus, in revealing themselves to each other, do wicked men foreshadow the time when they shall have to give account to God, and, as it were, reveal to Him the base thought and "idle word" and sinful deed which they have done (St. Matt. xii. 36. Rev. xx. 12, 13.).

15. "A fit time;" or, day. "What fit time," asks Hippolytus, "but that of the Passover, at which the laver is prepared in the garden for those that burn, and Susanna washes herself, and is presented as a 'pure bride to God?'" The "two maids" he likens to the "faith in Christ and love to God," by whose help as handmaids "the Church" confesses and receives the laver."

17. "Oil and washing balls" (or, unguents). "What were these unguents but the commandments of the Holy Word? And what was the oil but the power of the Holy Spirit, with which believers are anointed as with ointment, after the laver of washing?" (*Hippolytus*).

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20 Behold, the garden doors are shut, that no man can see us, and we are in love with thee; therefore consent unto us, and lie with us.

21 If thou wilt not, we will bear witness against thee, that a young man was with thee: and therefore thou didst send away thy maids from thee.

22 Then Susanna sighed, and said, I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing, it is death unto me: and if I do it not, I cannot escape your hands.

23 It is better for me to fall into your hands, and not do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.

24 With that Susanna cried with a loud voice: and the two elders cried out against her.

25 Then ran the one, and opened the garden door.

26 So when the servants of the house heard the cry in the garden, they rushed in at a privy door, to see what was done unto her.

27 But when the elders had declared their matter, the servants were greatly ashamed: for there was never such a report made of Susanna.

28 And it came to pass the next day, when the people were assembled to her husband Joacim, the two elders came also full of mischievous imagination against Susanna to put her to death;

20. Cp. St. Paul's burning protest against persons hypocritical, wicked, and lawless as these (Rom. ii. 17—24.). The name of God is blasphemed among men by conduct so contradictory to the religion they profess.

21. "And there was in truth a young man with her, even Daniel, "present in the spirit of prophecy; not indeed for unlawful intercourse, "but to bear witness to her purity and truth" (*Hippolytus*).

22. "Death" was the legal punishment for adultery (Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22. St. John viii. 5.). Susanna's "strait" (cp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.) was death on every side: death at the hands of God, due to her dishonour, should she consent to the tempters; death at the hands of men, due to their "witness" against her (ver. 21.), should she refuse.

23. It is better to die by the hands of wicked men, and live with God, than to be delivered from men, and fall into the hands of God. Susanna despised them who could kill the body, in order that she might save her soul from death. Cp. the similar courage of Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 9.), and the assertion of the same principle by St. Peter (Acts iv. 19, 20.). Susanna's resolution once made, she took the initiative; and her cry against the judges, quickly caught up by theirs against her, speedily brought servants to the spot (vv. 24—26.).

28. The elders probably lived at a neighbouring village (cp. ver. 6.);

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29 and said before the people, Send for Susanna, the daughter of Chelcias, Joacim's wife. And so they sent.

30 So she came with her father and mother, her children, and all her kindred.

31 Now Susanna was a very delicate woman, and beauteous to behold.

32 And these wicked men commanded to uncover her *face*, (for she was covered) that they might be filled with her beauty.

33 Therefore her friends and all that saw her wept.

34 Then the two elders stood up in the midst of the people, and laid their hands upon her head.

35 And she weeping looked up toward heaven : for her heart trusted in the Lord.

36 And the elders said, As we walked in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids,

and, on the morrow after the event described in vv. 15—27, they appeared at their usual justice-room in Joacim's house, and,—on this occasion,—as accusers as well as judges. It is distinctly stated that their purpose was "to put Susanna to death." A "mischievous" (lit. lawless) "imagination," detected and thwarted, will seek the utter ruin of the person who thwarts, lest the mischief be exposed to others and recoil on the head of the true offender. Cp. the conduct of Judas Iscariot (St. John xii. 3—8; St. Matt. xxvi. 6—16.).

29. The "matter declared" before the servants alone (ver. 27.) was to be publicly judged (ver. 41.). Note the esteem in which Susanna was held by her household (ver. 27.), and the affection with which she was regarded by "all her kindred" (vv. 30, 33.). The LXX. adds, that the household consisted of fifty male and female servants, and that the number of Susanna's children was four.

32. The text gives the reason for the unveiling, but it was also commanded by the law which dealt with women accused of unfaithfulness (cp. Num. v. 18.). The degradation which this act implied developed in the bystanders, not scorn and anger, but pity and weeping. The beauty of Susanna was enhanced by her faith, chastity, and sanctity.

34. "Laid their hands upon her head." This was the act of witnesses (cp. Lev. xxiv. 14. Deut. xvii. 7.). In this case the accusers were the only witnesses; and in the event of the accused being proved guilty, these witnesses would have been the first to cast the stones of death. Cp. 1 Kin. xxi. 13. St. John viii. 7.

35. "She weeping." "By her tears she attracted the Word from "heaven, Who was with tears to raise the dead Lazarus" (*Hippolytus*). Cp., for a similar trust in the face of death, Dan. iii. 17; vi. 16, 22 Acts xii. 3—5, 11.

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and shut the garden doors, and sent the maids away.

37 Then a young man, who there was hid, came unto her, and lay with her.

38 Then we that stood in a corner of the garden, seeing this wickedness, ran unto them.

39 And when we saw them together, the man we could not hold: for he was stronger than we, and opened the door, and leaped out.

40 But having taken this woman, we asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us: these things do we testify.

41 Then the assembly believed them, as those that were the elders and judges of the people: so they condemned her to death.

42 Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said, O everlasting God, that knowest the secrets, and knowest all things before they be:

41. The credit attached to the words of "elders and judges" secured immediate belief for the words of these men. There was no one to refute them, and no one believed it possible that men of their age and position would bear false witness (cp. ver. 52, *Note*). Susanna herself was tongue-tied; a merciful law prevented the accused incriminating herself while the case was still under adjudication (cp. Num. v. 12, &c.). It was not till sentence of death was passed that she spoke; and the evident genuineness of her innocence drew forth Daniel's protest (ver. 45.).

Our Lord found it necessary in His day to warn men against a too ready belief that the Scribes and Pharisees were as pure in life as the precepts they proclaimed (St. Matt. xxiii. 1, &c. St. John viii. 7—9), and the Church in every age has had to repeat the warning. May God ever grant to those set in authority in Church and State, purity of life as well as purity of teaching! The highest can only be the best through frequent and prayerful recollection of the warning, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12.).

42. The idea in the title given to God, "a knower of secrets," founded probably on Ps. xlv. 21, occurs several times in Daniel (e.g. ii. 28, 29, 47.), under the form of "revealer of secrets." Susanna recognises in God the two attributes of knowing the truth, however obscured, and of "knowing all things before they be" (lit. before their birth). In this latter title is implied that trust which believes that God will also order for ultimate good things which He has permitted to have beginning or existence. God, she affirms, knew of old that what had happened to her would happen; knew that "false witness," "malicious invention," would try to procure her death. Therefore she prays aloud that He will avert the injustice she is powerless to prevent; "and the Lord heard her voice." "God heareth those who call upon Him from a pure heart; but from those who call upon Him in deceit and hypocrisy, He turneth away His face" (*Hippolytus*. Cp. James i. 6, 7; iv. 3.). Nothing less

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43 thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me, and, behold, I must die; whereas I never did such things as these men have maliciously invented against me.

44 And the Lord heard her voice.

45 Therefore when she was led to be put to death, the Lord raised up the holy spirit of a young youth, whose name was Daniel:

^a Matt. 27.
24.

46 who cried with a loud voice, ^a "I am clear from the blood of this woman."

47 Then all the people turned them toward him, and said, What mean these words that thou hast spoken?

48 So he standing in the midst of them said, Are ye such fools, ye sons of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth ye have condemned a daughter of Israel?

49 Return again to the place of judgment: for they have borne false witness against her.

than an assurance like unto Susanna's can support those who have to live down the false accusations of hypocrisy, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

45. "The Lord raised up." The LXX. renders this: "The angel" "of the Lord gave, as he was commanded, a spirit of understanding" (cp. Is. xi. 2.), &c., with evident recollection of the frequent intercourse with angels mentioned in the Book of Daniel (e.g. ix. 21; x. 5.).

The words "the holy spirit" (of a youth), are not only to be taken in the sense usually understood by a Christian reader; they are first of all a reflection of the spiritual power acknowledged by the Canonical Book to exist in Daniel (cp. e.g. Dan. iv. 9; v. 11.). It is not quite clear from the narrative whether or not Daniel had been present at the so-called trial. The probability (see ver. 49.) is in favour of his not having been. The more energetic language of the LXX. makes him break through the crowd and address them; it omits his cry, "I am clear," &c. (ver. 46.), with which, according to the text, he attracted notice. That cry should be compared with the *marg. ref.*, and the contrast noted between the conduct of the young, powerless (humanly speaking) servant of God, and that of the older, powerful servant of Imperial Rome. Then that cry turned God's people to an act of injustice; now,—as it always will, when spoken in the spirit of a Daniel or an Athanasius,—it compelled an enquiry which issued in favour of truth and justice.

48. "Are ye such fools?" Rather, "Are the sons of Israel so foolish?" Their foolishness was shown (1.) in not examining either the witnesses or the person alleged to be guilty; (2.) in consequently arriving at no independent certainty or truth respecting the charge. Could this, Daniel asks, be the act of sons of Israel to a daughter of Israel; of brothers to a sister whose descent was from their common ancestor, the "Prince with God?"

49. Note the courage of Daniel's positive assertion, "they have borne

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50 Wherefore all the people turned again in haste, and the elders said unto him, Come, sit down among us, and shew it us, seeing God hath given thee the honour of an elder.

51 Then said Daniel unto them, Put these two aside one far from another, and I will examine them.

52 So when they were put asunder one from another, he called one of them, and said unto him, O thou that art waxen old in wickedness, now thy sins which thou hast committed aforetime are come to light:

53 for thou hast pronounced false judgment, and hast condemned the innocent, and hast let the guilty go free; albeit the Lord saith, ^b The innocent and ^b Ex. 23. 7. righteous shalt thou not slay.

"false witness:" it was the courageous assertion of a lover of truth and defender of the innocent.

50. An old Version adds that the seat (of judgment) offered to Daniel was refused by him: he preferred to judge standing. The offer of the elders was craftily made. One who sat side by side with them would hardly denounce them, while their apparent readiness to welcome him would disarm the suspicion aroused in the people by Daniel's words.

"The honour of an elder;" i.e. the honour and right to judge, which belongs to an elder; probably said ironically.

52. The LXX. omits the invitation of ver. 50, and makes the following interesting addition after the word "another:"—"Daniel said to the "synagogue (or assembly), Now shall ye not consider that these men are "elders, (and) say that they (i.e. because they are elders) shall not lie " (or bear false witness); but I will examine them," &c. It was this very preconception of the impossibility of these men speaking anything but the truth, which had led to the unjust judgment (ver. 41.).

"Are come to light." The words "to light" are not in the original. Others render, "thy sins . . . are come to their proper consequences;" i.e. thy sins, whether known or unknown, are now detected. Cp. the solemn warning, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. xxxii. 23.), and the words of Christ (St. Luke xii. 2, 3.). St. Paul has told us what are the wages or fruits of sin (Rom. vi. 23. Cp. 2 Pet. ii. 15.). The special sin of this elder seems to have been injustice in his position as a judge, an abuse specially subject to God's censure (cp. Ps. lxxxii. 2; Is. i. 23; Jer. v. 28.); the special sin of the second judge was his sensuality (vv. 56, 57. Cp. St. Matt. v. 27—29.).

53. *"The innocent," &c.* See *marg. ref.*

The strong language used by Daniel to these men, language almost amounting, at first sight, to the condemnation of them unheard, was something more than the language expressive of the strong feelings of a young man. It was the language of one to whom their real characters

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54 Now then, if thou hast seen her, tell me, Under what tree sawest thou them companying together? Who answered, Under a ²mastick tree.

² Gr. *lentisk tree*.

55 And Daniel said, Very well; thou hast lied against thine own head; for even now the angel of God hath received the sentence of God to cut thee in two.

56 So he put him aside, and commanded to bring the other, and said unto him, O thou seed of Chanaan, and not of Juda, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust hath perverted thine heart.

had been revealed by God, and the protest of a "holy spirit" (ver. 45.) against the crimes of the "hoary head not found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. xvi. 31.).

54. "If thou hast seen her." In this question, addressed to the first of the elders, Daniel intimates his doubt whether the story were in any sense a true one. Apparently the manner of the answerer convinced him, for he did not put a similar question to the second elder (ver. 58.). The LXX. makes Daniel ask (here and in ver. 58.) not only "under what tree," but also "in what part of the garden;" to this latter point the elders give no answer.

There is in the original text a play upon words, which is preserved in the Vulgate, but lost in our translation. The word "**mastick tree**" ("**schinon**") is played upon by Daniel to suggest the punishment due. God's angel is to "cut in two" (cp. "**schism**") the false witness (see also vv. 58, 59.). The mastick tree (the *Pistacia lentiscus* of botanists, belonging to the order *Anacardiaceæ*) yields a valuable gum, largely imported and widely used. The tree is very common along the Mediterranean, in some cases attaining a height of ten or twelve feet, and one foot in diameter. The word "**mastick**" expresses rather the gum or resin of the tree than the tree itself; it was so called because it was chewed (hence our "**masticate**") in the East.

55. "Very well; thou hast lied." Rather, "Well (of a certainty) hast thou lied."

"Against thine own head;" i.e. (as LXX.) against thine own life: the head being, according to Hebrew notions, the most honourable member of the body, the seat of the brain-power which directed the acts of the other members.

"To cut thee in two." The LXX. adds, "this day." The prescribed death was by stoning (see ver. 62.); the general mode of description employed here is due to the play upon words (see ver. 54, *Note*). Cp. the warning language used by Christ (St. Matt. xxiv. 51.); the punishment of the "evil servant" is to be "cut asunder," and "his portion with the hypocrites."

56. "O thou seed of Chanaan, and not of Juda." The immorality of the Canaanites was notorious; that of the people of Sidon (which the LXX. reads here instead of Chanaan) especially so. Daniel means, that one so sensual and immoral as the elder before him could not be one of God's chosen people.

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57 Thus have ye dealt with the daughters of Israel, and they for fear companied with you : but the daughter of Juda would not abide your wickedness.

58 Now therefore tell me, Under what tree didst thou take them companying together? Who answered, Under an ²holm tree.

59 Then said Daniel unto him, Well ; thou hast also lied against thine own head : for the angel of God waiteth with the sword to cut thee in two, that he may destroy you.

² Or, kind of oak.

60 With that all the assembly cried out with a loud voice, and praised God, who saveth them that trust in him.

61 And they arose against the two elders, for Daniel had convicted them of false witness by their own mouth :

62 and according to the law of Moses ^cthey did

^c Deut. 19. 19.
Prov. 19. 5.

57. "Daughters of Israel . . . daughter of Juda." The women of the ten tribes are contrasted with one woman of the tribe of David. They had yielded "through fear;" one only, Susanna, had preferred death to dishonour. The writings of the prophets are full of plain-spoken denunciations of the immoral lives of the women of both Israel and Judah (e.g. Is. iii. 16, &c. Jer. iii. Ezek. xxiii.); and, though captivity and punishment produced great changes for the better, the narrative here seems to intimate that purity of life was more common among the daughters of Judah than among their sisters of Israel.

58, 59. A play upon words occurs here also, similar to that in vv. 54, 55. The words "holm tree" and "cut thee in two" have, in the original, similar sounds. The "holm tree" is usually taken to be the evergreen oak (*Quercus pseudo-coccifera*), which it resembles in general appearance and in colour of foliage, but the leaves are prickly and different in shape.

59. "The angel . . . with the sword." Cp. Gen. iii. 24. 1 Chr. xxi. 16. This representation of the executor of God's justice would be readily apprehended by Babylonian bystanders (cp. *Records of the Past*, IX. 135.).

"That he may destroy you." The LXX. reads, "until the people shall destroy you." This would be in accordance with the Law (ver. 62.).

60. Cp. Ps. xxxi. 19, 22. Prov. xxix. 25. Is. xii. 2. 2 Cor. i. 10.

62. Cp. the *marg. reff.*, and Acts vii. 58. The LXX. inserts the further details, "they gagged them; and, leading them out, cast them into the trench (where they were stoned)." "Then the angel of the Lord" (standing there as a witness as well as a judge) "cast fire into the midst of them, and the innocent blood was saved," &c.

The punishment and death which the falsehearted and false speaking elders had intended against Susanna thus recoiled upon them-

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unto them in such sort as they maliciously intended to do to their neighbour: and they put them to death. Thus the innocent blood was saved the same day.

63 Therefore Chelcias and his wife praised God for their daughter Susanna, with Joacim her husband, and all the kindred, because there was no dishonesty found in her.

64 From that day forth was Daniel had in great reputation in the sight of the people.

selves. So true is it that "the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness" (Prov. xi. 5.). "He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made; his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate" (Ps. vii. 15, 16.).

63, 64. Instead of the text the LXX. reads: "Therefore are the young men of Jacob beloved for their integrity" (the same word as "innocency" in 1 Macc. ii. 60, and "uprightness" in 1 Chr. xxix. 17.). "As for us, let us preserve as sons the mighty young men. For the young men are godly, and there shall be in them the spirit of knowledge and understanding for ever and ever."

"To this history, beloved, ought we to give heed; fearing lest any one be overtaken in any transgression, and risk the loss of his soul. For we know that God is the Judge of all; and the Word Himself is the Eye which nothing that is done in the world escapes. Therefore, let us,—always watchful in heart and pure in life,—imitate Susanna" (*Hippolytus*).

THE HISTORY OF THE DESTRUCTION
OF
²BEL AND THE DRAGON,
CUT OFF FROM THE END OF DANIEL.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS work is essentially apocryphal. The writer affirmed (according to the LXX. Version) that it was an excerpt from the prophecy of Habakkuk, and (according to the text of Theodotion) assigned the events of which it speaks to the reign of Cyrus, as a means of bringing forward his own political and religious opinions, without regard to historical accuracy. Some of the statements may be in themselves correct, but they are enveloped with inaccurate and improbable details, and with a purely imaginary use of proper names and places.

Thus, the destruction of the temple of Bel (ver. 22.) is recorded by the writers Strabo and Arrian as practically completed by the time of Alexander the Great, who wished to restore it; but the time and manner of its destruction is unknown. It probably followed gradually as the result of the act of Xerxes in plundering it. Theodotion's statement that Cyrus destroyed it is very improbable.

Again, there may have been a "dragon" in Babylon, but the difficulties connected with the story as here told (ver. 23, &c.) are principally twofold: (a.) If the animal intended was a *living* animal, capable of literally eating and drinking, the worship paid to it is (at present) unconfirmed from other sources. Serpent worship may and probably did pass from Egypt to Babylonia, but with the Babylonians the worship would become the worship of an image, not that of the living reptile. (b.) If the king's language (ver. 24.) was figurative, the identification of the dragon of the text with that of the gems (see ver. 23, *Note*), gives an image very unlike a serpent. In the "Standard Inscription" of Nebuchadnezzar, descriptive of his restoration of the temple of Bel, the king mentions that he has "brought ornaments for Dakan" (*Records of the Past*, V., p. 117.), which is identified by some with Dagon the Phœnician fish-god (cp. 1 Sam. v. 2.);

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and possibly the writer of Bel and the Dragon may have intended such identification.

Lastly, the share assigned to Habakkuk, either as the writer or as the messenger of deliverance, is highly legendary. It may almost be thought that this prophet's name was purposely chosen because so little can be certainly affirmed about him. Tradition has been more busy with his name than with that of any other prophet; the circumstances of his life are almost unknown, and the date of his prophecy,—variously placed in the reign of Jeboiakim, or of Manasseh, or of Josiah,—is still matter of discussion. The language he uses (e.g. i. 4 : ii. 13 ; iii. 17.) is, however, little in accordance with the picture of labourers working peacefully in harvest-time, as suggested in ver. 33.

The latter part of the story (ver. 30 to end) is evidently based upon Daniel vi.

The object of the writer may at the same time be admitted to be the exposure of the falseness and vanity of all idols, and the inculcation of firm trust in “the living God.” In this respect these legends have an edifying element, though vastly imperfect when compared with the history which suggested them (Dan. vi.).

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19 *The fraud of Bel's priests is discovered by Daniel, 27 and the dragon slain, which was worshipped.* 33 *Daniel is preserved in the lions' den.*
42 *The king doth acknowledge the God of Daniel, and casteth his enemies into the same den.*

AND king Astyages was gathered to his fathers, and Cyrus of Persia received his kingdom.

2 And Daniel ² conversed with the king, and was ^{2 Or, lived with the king.} honoured above all his friends.

3 Now the Babylonians had an idol, called Bel, and there were spent upon him every day twelve

1. "Cyrus," according to Herodotus, was son of the Persian Cambyzes, and grandson to Astyages the Median king, whose daughter Mandane had married Cambyzes. The circumstances under which Cyrus succeeded to the throne are still matters of dispute. Herodotus states that Cyrus deposed Astyages; and this seems to be confirmed by a cuneiform inscription dealing with the capture of Babylon by Cyrus; according to which, in the year B.C. 550 (?), the Medians revolted, Astyages was made prisoner by his own soldiers, and sent to Cyrus, who captured and spoiled the city of Ecbatana. The text here does not contradict these statements, if it passes them over in silence. Cyrus was something more than a mere political benefactor to the Jews (cp. Is. xlv. 28; xlv. 1.), and a Jewish writer would naturally not care to give prominence to acts bearing an unfilial aspect.

2. "Conversed with." See *marg.* rendering. The word "converse" is used in the text in the same way as "conversation" is frequently used in the A.V. of the Old and New Testaments, for the general tone and manner of life (e.g. Pss. xxxvii. 14; l. 23. 2 Cor. i. 12. James iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 12. 2 Pet. iii. 11.).

The LXX. omits ver. 1, and begins the history with this verse, which it reads as follows: "There was a certain man, a priest, of the name of "Daniel, the son of Abal, (and one) who conversed with the king." A priest named Daniel is mentioned in Ezra viii. 2. Neh. x. 6, but Daniel the prophet was not a priest. Abal is an unknown name, possibly the same as Abel; unless it be the Assyrian equivalent for "son," which the Alexandrian translator found in the margin of his MS., and, —not understanding,—inserted in the text as a proper name. A tradition, preserved by Epiphanius, gives Sabaan as the name of Daniel's father. Notice that the LXX. does not give the king any name.

"And was honoured," &c. The events narrated in Dan. v. would naturally bring him prominently before the captor of Babylon. The words are in fact a paraphrase of Dan. vi. 3.

3. Bel-Merodach was the patron-god of Babylon, whose worship had become specially prominent under Nebuchadnezzar. Not only does the celebrated "Standard Inscription" describe how the king built for Bel a magnificent temple (see *Records of the Past*, V., p. 111, &c.), but other inscriptions testify to the fact that sacrifices of the most lavish character were offered upon the altars of the gods, especially with a view to obtain success in war. Cyrus and Antiochus the Great (B.C. 205.) both repaired this temple. The sacrifices "spent" (see Judith xi. 13, *Note*) upon Bel seem poor and small in comparison; but the

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great measures of fine flour, and forty sheep, and six vessels of wine.

4 And the king worshipped it, and went daily to adore it: but Daniel worshipped his own God. And the king said unto him, Why dost not thou worship Bel?

5 Who answered and said, Because I may not worship idols made with hands, but the living God, who hath created the heaven and the earth, and hath sovereignty over all flesh.

6 Then said the king unto him, Thinkest thou not that Bel is a living God? seest thou not how much he eateth and drinketh every day?

Babylonians were not now conquerors but conquered. In illustration of the statements of the text (see also ver. 24.), a Babylonian calendar prescribes on the third day of the month Kislev (the ninth month in the year) an offering of corn before the statue, and on the twelfth day a portion of meat, apparently cooked.

“Six vessels of wine.” The “vessel” is in the original a “measure” (the “firkin” of St. John ii. 6.), of the value of eight to nine gallons. Wine was frequently placed in stone jars containing about two and a half “measures;” if that was the case here, and the six vessels were six jars, the libation offered would amount to between 110 and 135 gallons.

4. That a Persian king should “worship” a Babylonian god is quite in accordance with the practice of the times. Outward conformity to the principal religious worship of his newly-acquired capital would cost him little, and would at least please the most superstitious of his subjects. The text of ver. 6 seems, however, to imply that Cyrus was credulous; and the writer may have had it in his mind to show how God’s “anointed” was cured of his credulity.

“Daniel worshipped his own God.” Cp. Dan. vi. 10. The “worship” by prostration, which king and people rendered to images of gold and brass, Daniel would only render to Him to Whom alone it was due (see LXX.). God was “his own” God, in a sense which Bel could never be to his worshippers; and Daniel would not “serve” God and Bel (ver. 5.). If God be our own God,—and this because He is our Father and we His children by adoption and grace,—we shall have no other gods but Him, we shall not try to “serve God and mammon” (St. Matt. vi. 24.).

5. In the “Standard Inscription” Nebuchadnezzar calls Bel-Merodach “Deity of Heaven and Earth,” “God of Gods,” “Lord of Lords;” and he affirms that the god had “assigned to him the empire over multitudes of men.” Whether or not the writer knew of these passages, he here introduces Daniel as using language directly contravening their boastfulness. Daniel refuses all worship to “idols made with hands” (cp. Ps. cxv. 4—9.), and assigns to God alone titles which Melchisedec (Gen. xiv. 19, 22.), and Moses (Num. xvi. 22.), and Jeremiah (xxxii. 27.), had been among the foremost to proclaim in their several generations.

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7 Then Daniel smiled, and said, O king, be not deceived: for this is but clay within, and brass without, and did never eat or drink any thing.

^a Eccius. 30.
19.

8 So the king was wroth, and called for his priests, and said unto them, If ye tell me not who this is that devoureth these expences, ye shall die.

9 But if ye can certify me that Bel devoureth them, then Daniel shall die: for he hath spoken blasphemy against Bel. And Daniel said unto the king, Let it be according to thy word.

10 Now the priests of Bel were threescore and ten, beside their wives and children. And the king went with Daniel into the temple of Bel.

11 So Bel's priests said, Lo, we go out: but thou, O king, set on the meat, and make ready the wine, and shut the door fast, and seal it with thine own signet;

12 and to morrow when thou comest in, if thou findest not that Bel hath eaten up all, we will suffer death: or else Daniel, that speaketh falsely against us.

7. The image was made of plaster, and overlaid with brass. Though the setting the statue in its proper place is narrated at length in the "Standard Inscription," the statue itself is not described. The composite nature of these images may be partly apprehended from Dan. ii. 32, 33.

8. "Expences;" i.e. what was "spent upon" Bel every day (ver. 3.).

The test proposed (vv. 8—9.) was similar in spirit to that which Elijah proposed to Ahab, when he wished to expose the false pretensions of the prophets of Baal (1 Kin. xviii. 21—24.). So the Christian, like Elijah and Daniel, must "not cast away that confidence which hath great recompence of reward" (Heb. x. 35.), when he would fight for God against the idols of the world, the flesh, and the devil. To expose their vanity and emptiness, uselessness and deadness, is often a most powerful means of weaning souls away from their corrupting and unsatisfying worship.

9. "And Daniel said," &c. The LXX. reads: "And Daniel said unto the king, Let it be so. If I shall not prove that it is not Bel who eateth these things, I will die, and all who are with me. Now the priests of Bel . . . children. And they brought the king into the sanctuary (of the idol), and food was laid before the king and Daniel, and wine mixed (with water) was brought in and laid before Bel. And Daniel said, 'Thou, O king, seest that these things are laid here. Thou shalt therefore seal the locks of the temple when it is closed. And the matter pleased the king.' The custom noticed here of mixing water with wine in the libation, was not only an Eastern but also a Greek and Roman practice. The English Version omits all allusion to it.

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13 And they little regarded it: for under the table they had made a privy entrance, whereby they entered in continually, and consumed those things.

14 So when they were gone forth, the king set meats before Bel. Now Daniel had commanded his servants to bring ashes, and those they strewed throughout all the temple in the presence of the king alone: then went they out, and shut the door, and sealed it with the king's signet, and so departed.

15 Now in the night came the priests with their wives and children, as they were wont to do, and did eat and drink up all.

16 In the morning betime the king arose, and Daniel with him.

17 And the king said, Daniel, are the seals whole? And he said, Yea, O king, they be whole.

13. "They little regarded it." Cp. the use of the word in Dan. iii. 12; xi. 37. They despised the idea of danger and Daniel; not supposing that he knew their secret. When, in the same boastful spirit, the wicked exclaim, "I fear not God nor regard man" (St. Matt. xviii. 4.), then "their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness; they shall be driven on and fall" (Jer. xxiii. 12; cp. Ps. lxxiii. 18.).

14. "Ashes." The word in the original applies to the ashes of a funeral pile, as distinguished from wood or other ashes. If the word were selected advisedly, the writer would seem to symbolize the death these false priests were preparing for themselves.

"Sealed it with the king's signet." The LXX. adds here, "and with the signets of certain priests highest in rank." This double sealing, which is also mentioned in Daniel (vi. 17.), was a national custom. The second sealing was a check upon the first, that neither king nor priest should tamper with the locks. The Syriac Version adds that Daniel also affixed his seal.

17. According to the LXX., Daniel is the first speaker: "And Daniel said, O ye priests, look at your seals if they remain (whole); and thou, O king, consider if any thing ill-according (Wisd. xviii. 10.) to thee (thy purpose) hath happened. And they saw that the seal was (as the day before), and they took away the seal. And when they had opened the doors, they saw that all that was set before (Bel) was consumed" ("spent," ver. 3.), "and the tables empty. And the king rejoiced, and said to Daniel, Great is Bel, and there is no deceit in him." The last words may be in imitation of Is. liii. 9. Daniel, according to the LXX., took them up, and showed the king in whom there was deceit: "And Daniel laughed greatly, and said to the king, Come, see the deceit of the priests. And Daniel said to the king, Whose are these footsteps?" &c.

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18 And as soon as he had opened the door, the king looked upon the table, and cried with a loud voice, Great art thou, O Bel, and with thee is no deceit at all.

19 Then laughed Daniel, and held the king that he should not go in, and said, Behold now the pavement, and mark well whose footsteps are these.

20 And the king said, I see the footsteps of men, women, and children. And then the king was angry.

21 And took the priests with their wives and children, who shewed him the privy doors, where they came in, and consumed such things as were upon the table.

22 Therefore the king slew them, and delivered Bel into Daniel's power, who destroyed him and his temple.

23 ² And in that same place there was a great dragon, which they of Babylon worshipped.

² Some add this title,
Of the dragon.

24 And the king said unto Daniel, Wilt thou also say that this is of brass? lo, he liveth, he eateth and drinketh; thou canst not say that he is no living god: therefore worship him.

25 Then said Daniel unto the king, I will worship the Lord my God: for he is the living God.

20, 21. The LXX. states that the king went to the house of the priests, and found there the meats for Bel, and the wine; and that Daniel showed him the "privy entrance" (ver. 13.).

22. The LXX. closes the story thus: "And the king brought (the "priests) out of the temple of Bel, and delivered them over to Daniel; "he gave also the expences" (see ver. 8.), "which were Bel's, to Daniel, "and he (the king) destroyed Bel." On the accuracy of this verse, see the *Introduction*.

23. "A great dragon." In the Babylonian inscriptions dealing with the Fall, a dragon is connected with the account, as the serpent is with the Biblical narrative (Gen. iii.). The form of this creature, as given on the gems, is that of a griffin or dragon, generally with a head like a carnivorous animal, body covered with scales, legs terminating in claws like an eagle, and with wings on the back. Unlike the text, the dragon is in the inscriptions usually female.

25. Cp. ver. 5. "Lo, he liveth," the king said of the dragon (ver. 24.). Daniel again took up the king's words, but gave them their only true application: "The Lord my God. He is the living God;" and Him (alone) would Daniel worship. The title is applied to God by

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26 But give me leave, O king, and I shall slay this dragon without sword or staff. The king said, I give thee leave.

27 Then Daniel took pitch, and fat, and hair, and did seethe them together, and made lumps thereof: this he put in the dragon's mouth, and so the dragon burst in sunder: and Daniel said,

² Or, *Behold what ye worship.*

² Lo, these are the gods ye worship.

28 When they of Babylon heard that, they took great indignation, and conspired against the king,

Darius the Mede in the canonical Book of Daniel (vi. 20, 26.); and was one dear to every godly Israelite who treasured the words of his forefathers (Deut. v. 26.),—of Joshua (iii. 10.), of David (1 Sam. xvii. 26. Cp. Pss. xlii. 2; lxxxiv. 2.), of Hezekiah (2 Kin. xix. 4.). Cp. also St. Matt. xxvi. 63. In the New Testament, St. Paul, in the spirit of Daniel, exhorts the Gentiles to turn “from idols” (“vanities,” Acts xiv. 15.) “to serve the living and true God” (1 Thess. i. 9.); and Christians of every age will always find in the recollection that they are “the temple of the living God” (2 Cor. vi. 16.), and in the language and example of the Lord Himself (St. Matt. iv. 10.), a mighty protection against the worship of, and subjection to, perishable and earthly things.

26. Cp. the language of David to Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 47.). Neither did David (cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 40.), nor did Daniel (ver. 27.), despise human means, but they both relied upon the conviction, “the battle is the Lord's” (cp. 2 Chr. xx. 15.); they were upholding the honour and truth of God against men who defied Him and monstrosities which degraded Him. This is the true spirit in which the Christian proves himself not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully fights under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil.

27. The LXX. adds that the weight of the pitch was 30 manehs. Babylonian weights are in the form of lions or ducks, and represent a double system which makes up the heavier and lighter talent. On the supposition that the lighter Babylonian talent of 60 manehs is intended here, 30 manehs would be half a talent, or about 3,996 grs. troy weight.

The LXX. and other MSS. have, “the dragon eating it burst in sunder.” The addition is possibly an ironical comment upon the popular belief (ver. 24.). Cp. the irony of Elijah (1 Kin. xviii. 27.) upon the incapacity of Baal.

“Lo, these,” &c. Rather, “Behold your gods, the things which ye worship” (the same word as in Wisd. xiv. 20; xv. 17.). If thus powerless to defend themselves, equally powerless were they to help others.

An act similar in spirit to these attributed to Daniel is told of St. Boniface (A.D. 716—755.), the apostle of North Germany. An oak near Geismar, sacred to the thunder-god Donar, was greatly venerated by the Hessians; and the worship paid to it checked materially conversions to Christianity. Boniface resolved to cut down the tree. On the day appointed, a multitude of pagans stood prepared to witness the god defend himself and immolate the daring assailant. Boniface had struck but a few blows, when a violent wind completed the de-

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saying, The king is become a Jew, and he hath destroyed Bel, he hath slain the dragon, and put the priests to death.

29 So they came to the king, and said, Deliver us Daniel, or else we will destroy thee and thine house.

30 Now when the king saw that they pressed him sore, being constrained, he ^b delivered Daniel ^b Dan. 6. 16. unto them:

31 who cast him into the lions' den: where he was six days.

32 And in the den there were seven lions, and they had given them every day ²two carcasses, ²Or, two slaves. and two sheep: which then were not given to them, to the intent they might devour Daniel.

33 Now there was in Jewry a prophet, called Habbacuc, who had ³made pottage, and had broken ³Or, sod. bread in a bowl, and was going into the field, for to bring it to the reapers.

struction of the oak. The pagans confessed the powerlessness of Donar, and assisted the saint to build a chapel with the wood of the tree in honour of St. Peter.

In the history of the early conversion of Northumbria, Coifi, the chief of the idolatrous priests, claimed the privilege of being the first to profane the altars and temples of the idols, on this ground: "I worshipped them through ignorance; I destroy them through the wisdom which has been given me by the true God." He hurled his spear into the temple, and commanded its destruction by fire (Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* ii. ch. 13.).

29. The LXX. reads: "And when the king saw that the people of the country were assembled against him" (i.e. Daniel), "he called those who lived with him, and said, I give Daniel to destruction." Cp. the act of Herod in surrendering John the Baptist to the anger of Herodias (St. Matt. xiv. 8—11.), and that of Pilate in delivering Jesus Christ to the will of the Jews (St. Matt. xxvii. 24—26. Acts iii. 13.). In all these and similar cases, terror, acting upon a naturally irresolute and weak mind, produces results always unjust, and frequently deplorable.

32. "Two carcasses." Human bodies, according to the LXX.; either the corpses of men who had died a natural death, or who had been put to death for some crime.

"They might devour." The LXX. adds, "and that he should not be buried." This would have been additional dishonour. The Jews shared the opinion of antiquity, that the absence of burial was the greatest disgrace. Cp. 2 Macc. ix. 15; xiii. 7.

33. In addition to the food, the LXX. mentions that Habakkuk had a jar of wine mixed with water. The mention of reapers would fix the time of this event at harvest. See, however, the *Introduction* on the whole subject. The LXX. further defines Habakkuk's mission to have taken place at the end of the six days (ver. 31.).

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34 But the angel of the Lord said unto Habbacuc, Go, carry the dinner that thou hast into Babylon unto Daniel, who is in the lions' den.

35 And Habbacuc said, Lord, I never saw Babylon ; neither do I know where the den is.

^c Ezek. 8. 3. 36 Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown, and ^e bare him by the hair of his head, and through the vehemency of his spirit set him in Babylon over the den.

^d 1 Kin. 17. 4. 37 And Habbacuc cried, saying, O Daniel, Daniel, take the dinner which God hath sent thee.

38 And Daniel said, Thou hast remembered me, O God : neither hast thou forsaken them that seek thee and love thee.

39 So Daniel arose, and did eat : and the angel of the Lord set Habbacuc in his own place again immediately.

40 Upon the seventh day the king went to bewail Daniel : and when he came to the den, he looked in, and, behold, Daniel was sitting.

41 Then cried the king with a loud voice, saying, Great art thou, O Lord God of Daniel, and there is none other beside thee.

^e Jer. 37. 17.

^f Dan. 6. 24.

42 ^e And he drew him out, ^f and cast those that were the cause of his destruction into the den : and they were devoured in a moment before his face.

36. "Through the vehemency of his spirit;" i.e. the rush or impetus with which the angel bare him. Cp. Dan. ix. 21.

38. This is the moral of the legend. It expresses a truth to be remembered and valued by all in every age. It comforted godly men of old (Deut. iv. 31. Josh. i. 5. Ps. xciv. 14. Is. xli. 17.); it is still the highest source of comfort in the day of trial and trouble, sorrow and sickness.

39. Compare with this history of Habakkuk being brought by the angel to Daniel and as suddenly removed, the history of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts viii. 26—39.). The simplicity of the latter narrative is in striking contrast with the present.

42. At the end of this verse, the Vulgate adds: "Then the king said, 'Let all who dwell in the whole world fear the God of Daniel ; for He is the Saviour, doing signs and wonders upon earth, Who hath delivered Daniel from the den of the lions ;'"—an addition evidently framed upon Dan. vi. 26, 27.

THE PRAYER OF MANASSES

KING OF JUDAH,

WHEN HE WAS HOLDEN CAPTIVE IN BABYLON.

INTRODUCTION.

AMONG the kings of Judah, Manasseh (B.C. 710.) bears a sad notoriety. The son of the good king Hezekiah, and called to the throne at the early age of twelve, his long reign of fifty-five years is stigmatized by the record: He "made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and "to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the "children of Israel" (2 Kin. xxi. 2. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 9.). In his lifetime the high places (consecrated to idolatry) which Hezekiah had broken down were restored and again frequented; altars for Baal, groves for the Asherah, were reared; the House of the Lord itself was profaned by images and their worship, and altars to the host of heaven were intruded into two of the sacred courts; the cruel and inhuman rites of Moloch, the passing children through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom, which had ceased in Judah since the days of Ahaz (2 Kin. xvi. 3.), once more became common. Together with the cruelty came superstition. "Familiar spirits and wizards" became the king's counsellors; the observing of times took the place of appointed fast and feast; the use of enchantments and witchcraft superseded the use of prayer and psalm. God, "longsuffering and very merciful," spake to Manasseh by His seers. The king was warned that God's promise to continue His people in the land which He gave to their fathers was conditional upon obedience. It should continue theirs, "only if they would observe to do "according to all that He had commanded them, and according to "all the Law that His servant Moses commanded them;" but the warning, the "angry threatening," fell on unheeding ears. "Manasseh "seduced his people to do more evil than did the nations whom the "Lord destroyed before the children of Israel." God's judgment came at last. According to the writer in the Book of Kings, His servants the prophets proclaimed in general terms that God would "forsake the remnant of His inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and that they should become a prey and a spoil to all their "enemies:" according to the writer in the Book of Chronicles, punishment was meted out in Manasseh's lifetime, and especially to the king himself,—“The Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of “the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and “bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.”

This addition on the part of the chronicler, and still more his statement of certain events which took place during and after cap-

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tivity,—“When he” (Manasseh) “was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him. And He was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom:” a restoration followed by thorough reformation,—is thought by many to be covered by that passage in the Book of Kings (2 Kin. xxi. 17.), which refers, for the “rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned,” to “the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.” Nevertheless, the absence of all direct reference to so momentous a circumstance on the part of the writer of the Kings is, to say the least, singular; and has consequently tended to throw discredit upon the statement of the chronicler. There is, however, nothing improbable in this exile to Babylon; and, unquestionably, the early belief in it as a fact gave rise to “The Prayer of Manasseh.”

It will have been noticed, in the passage quoted above from the Chronicles, that Manasseh “prayed unto the Lord.” It was a natural question for devout Jewish minds,—Had a prayer, so wondrously answered, been preserved? and if not, could one be framed whose language might be accepted as expressing the thoughts of the repentant king? The apocryphal work entitled, “The Prayer of Manasses, King of Judah, when he was holden captive in Babylon,” was the answer to this pious wish. It is difficult to say precisely by whom and when it was composed, but internal evidence is in favour of attributing it to a Greek-speaking Jew, of about the same date B.C. as the author of the additions to Daniel.

It followed, almost as a matter of course, that in later times the captivity and release of Manasseh became a fair field for legendary addition. Jew and Christian alike expanded the statements of Scripture and of this apocryphal work, in such a manner as seriously to affect their value. Thus, the simple statement that the Lord heard the king's prayer was deemed insufficient; the work entitled the *Apostolical Constitutions* added that a flame of fire forthwith surrounded him, and the iron fetters melted. These fetters, according to other early Christian statements, were of brass, and a girdle of brass encircled the prisoner, whose life was barely supported by bread and water with a little sour wine. At the close of his prayer those fetters burst, and the king escaped.

Setting aside these and similar additions, as curious rather than true or edifying, the reader may derive from the earnest Scriptural language of the prayer much that will correspond to the deep unexpressed thoughts of a repentant heart. It is no mere collection of penitential phrases, but the utterance of one who has sinned and sorrowed;—of one who, bending prostrate before the throne of grace, has done so with that broken and contrite heart which God will not despise;—of one who, seeking for pardon, has found it, and left on record words wherewith future generations may “taste and see how gracious the Lord is.” It is no slight testimony to its merits, that devout men have used it, during the Church's penitential seasons of Advent and Lent, as an alternative prayer to the more familiar confession of the Communion Service.

Two lessons have been drawn by the *Apostolical Constitutions* (ii. 22.) from this episode in the history of Manasseh. They are those which preface and conclude the recitation of “the Prayer.” The first, ad-

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dressed to the supreme ranks in the hierarchy of the Church, is still of inestimable value to all, whether clergy or laity, who recognize the wisdom of the Master's caution, "Judge not, that ye be not judged:"—"It is thy duty, O Bishop, to have before thine eyes the examples of those who have gone before, and to apply them skilfully to the cases of those who want words of severity or of consolation. Besides, it is reasonable that in thy administration of justice thou shouldst follow the will of God; and as God deals with sinners and with those that return, that thou shouldst act accordingly in thy judging." The examples adduced are, God's dealings with David, Jonah, Hezekiah, and Manasseh.

The second lesson is of personal application for every reader. Centuries have passed since the words were written; they will remain true so long as a Manasseh or a Peter (St. Matt. xxvi. 75. St. John xxi. 15—19.) shall exist to testify to the weakness of man and the strength of God, to sin confessed and sin forgiven:—"Ye have heard, beloved children, how the Lord punished for a while him (Manasseh) that was addicted to idols, and had slain many innocent persons; and yet received him when he repented, forgave him his offence, and restored him to his kingdom. Learn, therefore, that He not only forgives the penitent, but reinstates them in their former dignity."

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, Who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

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O LORD, Almighty God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed; who hast made heaven and earth, with all the ornament thereof; who hast bound the sea by the word of thy commandment; who hast shut up the deep, and sealed it by thy terrible and glorious

In the Greek Version this Prayer is divided into verses. Reference to particular words and phrases is thus made more easy than in the Authorized Version, which has omitted the verse-divisions. The Prayer may be conveniently divided, like the Collects of the Book of Common Prayer, into three principal divisions: (a.) an invocation, enumerating the attributes of Him to Whom the prayer is offered; (b.) a confession of sins; (c.) a petition for pardon for the past, and resolutions for the future.

“O Lord, Almighty God of our fathers.” Rather, “O Lord “Almighty, God of our fathers.” Note the use of the general title “Lord Almighty,” and then the special appeal to the “God of our fathers.” The title implies recognition of the Lord as Almighty, even over the gods of the conquerors from Assyria and Babylonia: the appeal is not to the “God of Israel,” the title which David had prayed might be that of God’s “own people” (cp. 2 Sam. vii. 22—26. 1 Chr. xvii. 20—24.); such a people as Israel, and kings such as Manasseh, had forfeited all claim to that title; but the appeal is made to the God of an earlier and more faithful generation, to “the God of Abraham,” &c.

“Their righteous seed.” “Righteous” through dedication to the God of righteousness. Cp. Eccus. x. 19. Song of the Three Children, ver. 65, *Note*.

St. Paul, commenting with sorrow on the “branches broken off the “olive tree” of God’s planting, and “the blindness in part (which had) “happened to Israel,” bids the Christian take the warning to heart: “Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. “Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural “branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee” (Rom. xi. 17—25.). Is not that too true of many professing Christians which was true of many professing Israelites, “They are not all Israel, which are of “Israel” (Rom. ix. 6. Cp. ii. 17, &c.)?

“Bound the sea.” God’s commandment bound the sea as with fetters; He gave it bounds which it should not pass. Cp. Gen. i. 6, 7. In Job xxxviii. 8, 11, the Almighty is described as “shutting up the “sea with doors,” and saying to it, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but “no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” The English reader will remember the tradition which represents King Canute sitting by the sea side, and recalling to his flattering courtiers this special power of God. They had asserted that one so victorious over men as their sovereign had but to command the sea, and its waves would shrink from wetting his royal feet. The tide swept up in its course, and presently encircled his stool. Canute bade the nobles accept this rebuke of their blasphemy, and in token of his own humility refused any more to wear a crown.

“Sealed it by thy terrible and glorious name.” The “Name” of

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name; whom all men fear, and tremble before thy power; for the majesty of thy glory cannot be borne, and thine angry threatening toward sinners is importable: but thy merciful promise is unmeasurable and unsearchable; for thou art the most high Lord, ^a of great compassion, longsuffering, very merciful, and repentest of the evils of men. Thou, O Lord, according to thy great goodness hast promised repentance and forgiveness to them that have sinned against thee: and of thine infinite mercies hast appointed repentance unto

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^a Ps. 86. 15.
Joel 2. 13.

God stands, as so often, for God Himself. The significance of this act is illustrated by Bel and the Dragon, ver. 14, *Note*. The words express, figuratively, what cannot be broken; what is perfect and highly treasured.

The figure is frequent in the New Testament in a spiritual sense. "Him hath God the Father sealed" (St. John vi. 27.), is said of Christ; in Him, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. i. 13. Cp. 2 Cor. i. 22. Rev. vii. 3, 4.), is said of Christians; the idea of indissoluble union with God combining with the exceeding value of the object so united. Hence, in the mind of the Church, Confirmation has been esteemed as both a season and means of "sealing" unto God. Prayer is then made that God's Holy Spirit may ever be with His servants, that the Lord may strengthen them with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them His manifold gifts of grace.

"**Importable**," i.e. not to be borne or endured. The word is a literal reproduction of the Latin Version here.

In this sentence a contrast is drawn between the effect of God's Presence on men generally, and on sinners in particular. The former find that Presence more than they can bear, because of "the majesty of His glory" (cp. Exod. xix. 16; xx. 18, 19. St. Matt. xvii. 1—6. Rev. i. 7, 13—17.); sinners, because of His "angry threatening" (cp. Deut. xxviii. 13, &c. St. Matt. xxv. 41. Rev. xx. 11—13; xxi. 8; xxii. 15.). *Note*, however, how the prayer continues. There are wilful, obstinate sinners; there are sinners who sorrow for and repent of their sins. To this latter class, according to the author of this prayer, belonged Manasseh; and such was the repentant prodigal (St. Luke xv. 18, 19.). For wilful sinners the writer has no consolatory words; but to repentant men he holds up God's "merciful promise, immeasurable and unsearchable." To God's anger there is measure; to His mercies none. His promise cannot be tracked out (see the original word); it is trackless as the sea; it leaves no traces which men can search out, yet are its precious results everywhere.

"**Repentest of the evils of men.**" Cp. *marg. ref.* to Joel. This passage is thus an early gloss upon the words of the prophet; and defines more precisely as "the evils of (i.e. committed by) men," the purposely indefinite "evil" of Joel.

"**According to thy great goodness . . . of thine infinite mercies.**" Cp. Ps. cxlv. 7; li. 1; lxix. 16. Repentance is here attributed to God

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sinners, that they may be saved. Thou therefore, O Lord, that art the God of the just, hast not appointed repentance to the just, as to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, which have not sinned against thee; but thou hast appointed repentance unto me that am a sinner: for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. My transgres-

in the sense of the previous sentence (cp. also Jonah iii. 9.). Repentance, followed by forgiveness, is stated to be the mind of God towards repentant sinners. He repents, or turns from His "angry threatening" towards them, according as they repent or turn from their sins against Him. And, as His forgiveness of men is proclaimed to be the consequence of His repentance or change of mind towards them, so is salvation held up to be the consequence of their repentance or change of life towards Him. Hence the writer says: He has "promised" repentance on His part, He has "appointed" it on theirs; and the verbs he uses bring together the greatness and the condescension of the Lord God. Cp. Rom. x., xi.

"Thou . . . the God of the just." It is only One claiming this title Who can say who are just and who are not; who need repentance and who do not; what degree of repentance is necessary for all men, and for what. The writer, in asserting of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, that they had "not sinned against God," does not mean that they were sinless, but that no comparison should be drawn between them and Manasseh. The Bible has not concealed the sins of Abraham (Gen. xii. 13; xvi. 6; xx. 2.), of Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 7.), and of Jacob (Gen. xxv. 31; xxvii. 35.); but no fair-minded reader would place their sins on the same level as those of the king (2 Kin. xxi. 2—16. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 2—10, 19.). The teaching of Jesus Christ is to the same effect. Out of a hundred men there may be "ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance," i.e. repentance in the same sense as the lost and straying one brought back to the fold by the Good Shepherd (St. Luke xv. 7.).

"Me that am a sinner." The "me" is emphatic, as if he would specify himself as a sinner above all sinners. It is this sense of sin which makes the sense of God's mercy the greater (St. Luke vii. 47.). Thus the publican prayed as if forgetful of any sin but his own, or as if no sin could be so great as his, "God be merciful to me *the sinner*" (St. Luke xviii. 13.). Of all who pray and confess their sins in this spirit it is true: "they go down to their house justified," at peace with the God of peace; for they that humble themselves shall be exalted.

"Sinned above the number of the sands of the sea;" i.e. a countless number of sins. When the angel of the Lord spake to Abraham to reward his obedience, the blessing of a posterity as numerous as the sand which is upon the sea shore was promised to him (Gen. xxii. 17.); when the sinner speaks to the Lord in confession of his disobedience, the heinousness and the consequences of his sin to others as well as to himself impels him to use a like figure as alone adequate to express its enormity. This is not the language of exaggeration, but of true humility. Thus our Lord compared the debt or sin of man against God to that enormous sum of 10,000 talents (St. Matt. xviii. 24.), which the

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sions, O Lord, are multiplied: my transgressions are multiplied, and I am not worthy to behold and see the height of heaven for the multitude of mine iniquities. I am bowed down with many iron bands, that I cannot lift up mine head, ² neither have any release: for I have provoked thy wrath, and done evil before thee: I did not thy will, neither kept I thy commandments: I have set up abominations, and have multiplied offences. Now therefore I bow the knee of mine heart, be-

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² Or, *neither take my breath.*

servant in the parable could never hope to pay. One who is truly penitent knows that he can never repay his debt to God; and therefore he will pray the more earnestly that the Lord will be "moved with compassion, and loose him and forgive him his debt," for the Redeemer's sake, Jesus Christ.

"My transgressions are multiplied." Cp. Is. lix. 12. The repetition, as here, of a sentence or of a word is a well-known Biblical mode of emphasis. Cp. below, "I have sinned, I have sinned;" "forgive me, forgive me;" and our Lord's well-known phrase, "Verily, verily."

"To behold . . . the height of heaven;" lit. to look with eager fixed gaze. Heaven is regarded as the abode of God's hosts, and the "height" of it as the special throne of the God of gods (Is. lxvi. 1, and *marg. ref.*). The knowledge of transgression and iniquity brings to the penitent a sense of unworthiness to lift up the eyes to what is so great and glorious, bright and pure. In Ps. cxxi., cxxiii., the Psalmist points out the character of those who, without ignoring their unworthiness, are able to look up hopefully and happily.

"Bowed down with many iron bands." The fetters and chains with which Manasseh's body was bound by the Assyrians (2 Chr. xxxiii. 11.) were a type to him of the bondage laid upon his soul (cp. Ps. cvii. 10.). Physically and spiritually he could not lift up the head; the massive collar of iron was about his neck, and the "yoke of transgressions" made his soul "not able to rise up" (Lam. i. 14.).

"Release." The same word as "rest" in 2 Cor. vii. 5. The *marg.* rendering, "breath," is taken from the Latin Version. For the wicked there is no peace, no release from the reproaches of conscience, no rest in the Lord. Sin is a stifling, suffocating atmosphere, in which the soul cannot breathe.

"For I have provoked," &c. He gives the reason for his abject and degraded state. The description of the king's life here given should be compared with the historical statements (2 Kin. xxi. 3, &c. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 2, &c.). The "abominations" and "offences" (stumblingblocks) he specially mentions were those connected with idolatry. This full confession of sins, and unsparing condemnation of self, were, and always will be, tokens of the genuineness of repentance.

"I bow the knee of mine heart." A striking expression. Not the body, but the heart, is represented as bending the knee. To "bow the knee" was a set phrase for worship, which might, however, be purely formal and external; hence the word "heart" is added to show that the

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beseeching thee of grace. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge mine iniquities: wherefore, I humbly beseech thee, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and destroy me not with mine iniquities. Be not angry with me for ever, by

worship was above all internal, and therefore real. Compare the words of the "General Thanksgiving:" "We beseech Thee, give us that due sense of all Thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth Thy praise *not only with our lips but in our lives*;" and the important distinction drawn by our Lord (St. Matt. vi.) and St. Paul (Rom. ii. 28, 29.) between outward and inward religion, between false and true worship.

"Beseeching thee of grace;" i.e., according to the Latin Version, "beseeching grace (goodness) from Thee." Others render the words, "earnestly desiring grace (pardon) from Thee." Note the steps in the prayer which follows: first, the blunt confession, "I have sinned" (twice repeated, as if to draw God's special attention to it), expanded into the statement "I acknowledge (I recognise and do not disguise) mine iniquities;" secondly, the humble prayer for general forgiveness (twice repeated), which then shapes itself into special petitions against special objects of the soul's dread,—destruction, everlasting anger taking the form of reservation for evil, and condemnation to hell. The words of this confession should be read and prayed slowly and deliberately: much spiritual profit may be gained by devoutly comparing it with the forms of confession of sins given in the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer, and in the Office for the Holy Communion, in the Book of Common Prayer.

"Destroy me not with mine iniquities." Not "on account of," but "together with" (cp. Wisd. x. 3. Eccclus. viii. 15.). Korah and his company "went down quick (alive) into the pit, with all that appertained unto them" (Num. xvi. 30, 33.); Ananias and Sapphira died with the lie in their mouths (Acts v. 1—10.). Such is the destruction which frequently falls upon the wilful sinner. "The ungodly," says the Psalmist, "who prosper in the world, are in no peril of death; they come in no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men: and this is the cause that they are so holden with pride. They corrupt each other; their talking is against the most High." But what is the end of these men? God sets "them in slippery places: He casts them down and destroys them. Oh! how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end" (Ps. lxxiii.). Cp. also the solemn warning of our Lord in two parables (St. Luke xii. 16—21; xvi. 19, &c.).

"Be not angry." The word in the Greek indicates excessive anger, and is used by Homer to express the heavy displeasure which gods feel. The anger of a man is often unjust and stirreth up strife (Prov. xxix. 22.); it may be productive of misery and even death (St. Matt. v. 21, 22. Cp. Gen. iv. 8.): but when God "makes a way to His anger," His anger is the anger of a just God provoked by the wilfulness and disobedience of His creatures, and "He spares not from death" (Ps. lxxviii. 50.). Jesus Christ has bidden us "not fear them which kill the body,

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reserving evil for me; neither condemn me into the lower parts of the earth. For thou art the God, *even* the God of them that repent; and in me thou wilt shew all thy goodness: for thou

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"but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him Which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (St. Matt. x. 28.). This was the fear in the mind of the writer of this prayer. He expresses his opinion that the soul which has not made its peace with God has as its condition a condition in which "evil is reserved" (or laid up) for it, and its place "the lower parts of the earth." The significance of the former part of this language is best understood by its contrast with the Israelites' belief embodied in the words, "How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, and which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men" (Ps. xxxi. 19.). The phrase, "the lower parts of the earth" (cp. Eph. iv. 19.), would not be the grave, but "Hades," or "hell," as the exact opposite to heaven. Christians, who are heirs through hope of God's everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of His dear Son, are taught to believe that in the day of judgment evil is reserved for the evil, as well as blessedness for the blessed (St. Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46. Rev. v. 10; xxi. 7, 8.).

"The God of them that repent." A most loving title. Cp. not only "the comfortable words" in the Office for the Holy Communion, but also the "Sentences of the Scriptures" placed at the beginning of the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer.

"In me." The pronoun is again especially emphatic. He would single himself out of all who repent as the special object, not for this or that fraction of God's goodness, but for *all* of it. Nothing less than complete purification and complete forgiveness could suffice for wickedness and disobedience such as his (cp. Ps. li. 4, 7. Is. i. 18.): therefore, whatever others might have been or have done, he specifies himself as the "unworthy" one. This true self-humiliation is also the cause of true confidence. He does not pray "Shew in me all Thy goodness," "Save me according to Thy great mercy;" but he speaks with trustful positiveness, "Thou *wilt* shew," "Thou *wilt* save." And to those who from the heart confess "There is no health in me; O Lord, have mercy upon me, a miserable offender," and truly repent, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says emphatically, "Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. iii. 6; x. 35.).

The "salvation" which came to Manasseh was freedom from captivity, and forgiveness of sins: he showed his sense of God's great mercy by a thorough reformation of his own life and—so far as he could secure it—of that of his people (2 Chr. xxxiii. 13—19.). Twice did the Lord Jesus Christ caution those whom He pardoned to "sin no more" (St. John v. 14; viii. 11. Cp. St. Matt. xiii. 43—45.); and by His followers has He distinctly warned Christians that "if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of (Himself) the Lord and Saviour, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. Heb. ii. 4—6.).

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wilt save me, that am unworthy, according to thy great mercy. Therefore I will praise thee for ever all the days of my life: for all the powers of the heavens do praise thee, and thine is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

“All the powers of the heavens;” i.e. all the host of heaven (see 2 Chr. xviii. 18. St. Matt. xxiv. 29.).

The prayer closes with words of praise, as if the speaker were conscious that his prayer would be answered. To God “all angels cry aloud, the heavens, and all the powers therein;” and man, forgiven and happy, joins their chorus, “Thine is the glory for ever and ever, Amen.”

And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer to God any sacrifice, yet do we beseech Him to accept our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by Whom and with Whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto God the Father Almighty, world without end. Amen.

I. AND II. MACCABEES.

INTRODUCTION.

The Books of the Maccabees have special interest and importance for the Church, particularly in these latter days.

1. They exhibit the fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel, especially in his eighth and eleventh chapters; and show the Divine Inspiration of those prophecies.

2. Those prophecies of Daniel foretold the conflicts and sufferings of the Hebrew Church in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria, persecuting the people of God, and endeavouring to exterminate their faith and worship; and, for a time, appearing to be successful in the attempt.

Those conflicts and sufferings of the Hebrew Church in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes have ever been regarded by the best expositors of these books, and by the ancient Christian Fathers generally, as foreshadowing the future conflicts and sufferings which await the Church of God in the last times, in the days of Antichrist, before the Second Advent of Christ. Indeed, the prophet Daniel, in his eleventh chapter, glides almost imperceptibly from speaking of Antiochus to speak of Antichrist.

Therefore this history of the Maccabees has a prophetical character.

The Maccabees stand in the interval between both Testaments; and it is observable that as their acts and sufferings were foretold in the Old Testament, so also are they celebrated in the New. See below, on 2 Macc. vi. 19, 28; vii. 7, 9, 14.

3. Their history has also a moral value and spiritual use.

The calamities of the Hebrew Church were from *within*. They arose from the cowardice, worldliness, and treachery of its renegade High Priests,—Jason, Menelaus, and Alcimus,—betraying the law and ritual of the Church and of the Temple; and accommodating themselves, by concessions and compromises, to the temporal power of heathen Syria, and by secularizing what was sacred, and by hellenizing Hebraism. These books show that the successes of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian King, and persecutor of God's Church and type of Antichrist, were not ascribable to his own valour or skill, but were due to the sins of the Hebrew Hierarchy at Jerusalem.

A Hebrew High Priest introduced Antiochus into the Temple, and

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enabled him to profane and to spoil it, and to set up there "the abominable nation of desolation."

In this respect they supply a solemn warning to the Church in the latter days. As long as the Priesthood is faithful, the enemies of the Church will be powerless against her. If her sacred places fall into the hands of her enemies,—if they are surrendered to heresy, schism, and secularism,—it will be through the treachery of her Ministers, who ought to have defended them.

4. On the other hand, the Books of the Maccabees give encouragement to the Christian Church.

The Hebrew Church in those days had no prophet. The Divine Presence and Glory, and the Urim and Thummim, had been withdrawn. She was left alone, and yet not alone, for she had the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament. In such times of spiritual isolation, God raised up faithful men and holy women to contend earnestly and suffer patiently for the Truth. The venerable Priest Eleazar, ninety years of age, rejecting the royal offer of respite and reward, and a martyr for the faith; and that other holy Priest Mattathias giving a charge to his five sons on his deathbed; and those five sons, among whom Judas Maccabæus stands preeminent as a valiant soldier of God, all of them fighting and shedding their blood for it; the faithful mother and her seven sons rejoicing to bear witness to it and to die for it; such are the examples which these books supply, to cheer the Church of God in the latter days. All these suffered joyfully, and they did not receive their reward in this life. Eleazar, Judas Maccabæus and his brethren, the faithful mother and her sons, died for the cause of God. They conquered by Martyrdom; and they looked forward with faith and hope to a blessed resurrection and joyful immortality.

They therefore exhort and encourage us, who have the New Testament as well as the Old, and who have clearer views of future rewards and punishments than were vouchsafed to them.

There is also encouragement to the Christian Church, in the assurance that, as (according to Daniel's prophecy) Antiochus Epiphanes was suddenly cut off by the hand of God in the midst of his career of furious rage against the Church of God, so will Antichrist.

5. The Books of the Maccabees display how powerful prayer is in times of trouble, and how ready Almighty God is to strengthen, guide, help, and support all who call upon Him faithfully, and to enable them to contend valiantly, and to suffer joyfully, unto death.

6. It cannot be denied that the Maccabees, and the historians of their acts in these two books, were animated by a vehement spirit of hatred and revenge against the heathen oppressors of God's people; and we may learn from them what the world owes to Christianity. It may be seen also in this history that Almighty God often interposes, by providential interventions, to defend and deliver His Church by means of

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the intestine strifes and struggles of her enemies. For example, He overruled the conflicts of Lysias and Antiochus Eupator against Philip (the supposed guardian of Eupator), and the contest of Demetrius (the son of Seleucus) against Antiochus Eupator and Lysias, as means of saving the Jews (1 Macc. vii.). The same may be said of the contentions of Demetrius with Alexander Balas (1 Macc. x.). All these were made subservient to the good of the Jews.

7. The latter part of the First Book of Maccabees, after the death of Judas Maccabæus (ix. 7.), may at first sight seem to lose its interest. But it may be observed that it sets forth (by way of contrast to the holy courage, pious patriotism, and religious loyalty of Judas Maccabæus and his brethren) the treachery, cruelty, calamities, and miserable ends of successive princes and nobles of the great kingdoms of Syria and Egypt; and it shows what the condition of powerful, wealthy, and intellectual nations is, and ever will be, without the knowledge and worship of the One True God; and thus it supplies a salutary warning in these latter days to the kingdoms of this world, which seem to be drifting away from Christianity.

8. The memory of the noble deeds and glorious sufferings of the Maccabees, was celebrated by the Ancient Church, both in the East and West (as may be seen in the works of Origen, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Leo, St. Augustine, and others), on a festival called by their name (August 1st); and portions of these books were publicly read in the assemblies of Ancient Christendom. When we consider the significance of their history for the Church of the latter days, we may well feel a desire that the Church of the present day would imitate the Ancient Church in these respects.

The Books of the Maccabees are called by Origen (in *Euseb. H. E.* vi. 25.) "Sarbeth Sarbanai El," which words are supposed to mean "Sceptre of the Prince of the Sons of God" (*Ewald, Keil*); or "History of the Prince of the Sons of God" (*Michaelis, Grimm*).

9. The First Book of the Maccabees was written in Hebrew, but the original is not now extant. The Greek book which we possess is a translation from it; it is distinguished from the other books by its Alexandrine dialectic forms (*Valckenaer*); and from this translation Ancient Versions have been made into Syriac and Latin.

It contains a narrative of events during forty years; from the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 175, to the death of Simon Maccabæus, B.C. 135. It is remarkable, on the whole, for its historical accuracy, and probably was written a short time after the events which it relates. It was known to, and is adopted in parts, by Josephus.

On the Second Book, see below, the *Introduction* to it

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CHAPTER I.

14 *Antiochus gave leave to set up the fashions of the Gentiles in Jerusalem, 22 and spoiled it, and the temple in it, 57 and set up therein the abomination of desolation, 63 and slew those that did circumcise their children.*

AND it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of ²Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece,

² Or, Chethiim.

2 and made many wars, and won many strong holds, and slew the kings of the earth,

3 and went through to the ends of the earth, and took spoils of many nations, insomuch that the earth

³ Or, his heart was exalted and lifted up.

was quiet before him; whereupon ³ he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up.

4 And he gathered a mighty strong host, and ruled over countries, and nations, and ⁴ kings, who became tributaries unto him.

⁴ Or, kingdoms which became, &c.

5 And after these things he fell sick, and perceived

⁵ Gr. that he dieth.

⁵ that he should die.

6 Wherefore he called his servants, such as were honourable, and had been brought up with him from his youth, and parted his kingdom among them, while he was yet alive.

7 So Alexander reigned twelve years, and *then* died.

8 And his servants bare rule every one in his place.

9 And after his death they all put crowns upon

CHAPTER I.

1. "And it happened." A Hebraism, like many others in this book, written in Hebrew and translated into Greek. See *Introduction*.

"Alexander" the Great, born B.C. 356, died B.C. 323; concerning whom see the prophecies of Daniel (viii. 21; xi. 3).

"Land of Chettiim," or "Chittim." The coast-lands of the Mediterranean, especially Greece and Italy. See Num. xxiv. 24; Dan. xi. 29, 30; below, viii. 5.

"Had smitten Darius." Codomannus, King of Persia (B.C. 336—331.), at Issus, B.C. 333; at Arbela, B.C. 331. See Dan. viii. 7, 20, 21.

4. "Kings." The Alexandrine MS. has "kingdoms."

6. "While he was yet alive." The partition of the kingdom among his four generals is assigned by other histories to a later period. On the fact, see on Dan. viii. 8, 22; also Dan. vii. 6; xi. 4.

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themselves; so did their sons after them many years: and evils were multiplied in the earth.

10 And there came out of them a wicked root, Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been an hostage at Rome, and he

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9. "Evils were multiplied." Rather, "they multiplied evils."

Antiochus Epiphanes.

10. "A wicked root." A Hebraism (Is. v. 10. Rev. v. 5.).

"Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes," or "Illustrious" (Compare 2 Macc. iv. 7.), reigned B.C. 175—164; son of Antiochus the Third, or "the Great," King of Syria, who reigned B.C. 224—187, and was succeeded by his son Seleucus IV. Philopator (B.C. 187—175.).

Antiochus Epiphanes was pre-announced by Daniel (xi. 21.). He had spent seven years at Rome, where he seems to have acquired a many-sided versatility, and at the same time to have imbibed an ambitious desire of universal domination, like that of the Cæsars. He desired to create an Eastern Rome at Antioch. On the death of his brother Seleucus he usurped the throne of Syria, which belonged to his nephew Demetrius. He was distinguished by intellectual ability, by military skill and prowess, and unbounded lust of power, and unscrupulous recklessness in endeavouring to bring all who opposed him under his despotic yoke. In his coins he claimed the epithet of "Theos" (God); but he is called by Daniel "a vile person" (or despicable), because he abused his gifts. He had no gravity, seriousness, or earnestness; no faith, or enthusiasm; no love of what is grand, noble, beautiful, and true. He was a clever mimic, a witty jester, a scurrilous buffoon; and he is described as casting off all royal dignity and common decency, even in public festivals, such as the magnificent one celebrated by him at Antioch; and as playing the part of a menial lacquey in the crowd, and as capering with ludicrous antics, frolicsome freaks, grotesque pranks and grimaces, like a strolling mountebank or an actor of farces and burlesques, for the diversion of his subjects. He was also a lavish prodigal, showering handfuls of money about him in the streets. Thus he gained the title of "Epimanes," or madman. He was withal a heartless sceptic and bold scoffer, a sensual libertine and sacrilegious spoiler of temples to supply the needs of his treasury, impoverished by his prodigality and by his wars. Above all, he was (as the Books of Maccabees show) a ruthless persecutor of the Church of God, and determined at any sacrifice of life, by fire and sword, and by savage tortures of aged men, women, and children, to crush her priesthood, her people, her law, and her ritual. He was assisted in this enterprise by Hebrew High Priests (Jason and Menelaus), and by other priests and people among the Jews, who betrayed the cause of their religion and country, and were ready, for their own advantage, to secularize spiritual things, and to hellenize Hebraism.

Therefore Antiochus Epiphanes has been regarded by the Christian Church as a type of ANTICHRIST; and the persecution of the Hebrew

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reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.

11 In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us : for since we departed from them ²we have had much sorrow.

² Gr. *many evils have found us.*

12 So this device pleased them well.

13 Then certain of the people were so forward herein, that they went to the king, who gave them licence to do after the ordinances of the heathen :

¹ 2 Macc. 4. 12.

³ Or, *set up an open school at Jerusalem.*

^b 1 Cor. 7. 18.

14 whereupon ^athey ³built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the customs of the heathen :

15 and ^bmade themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and ^cwere sold to do mischief.

^c 1 Kin. 21. 25.

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16 Now when the kingdom was established before Antiochus, he thought to reign over Egypt, that he might have the dominion of two realms.

^d Dan. 11. 25.

17 Wherefore he entered into Egypt ^dwith a great multitude, with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, and a great navy,

Church under him is a foreshadowing of the Antichristian persecution, which the Christian Church will endure in the latter days. The prophecy of Daniel (in chap. xi. 21—45.) passes imperceptibly from speaking of Antiochus to speak of Antichrist.

“Year of the kingdom of the Greeks;” or, era of the Greek kingdom of Syria, or of the Seleucidæ, which dates from the *Autumn* of B.C. 312 (the year of the victory of Seleucus Nicator over the forces of Antigonus). As the Hebrew ecclesiastical year begins in the *Spring* (Nisan), there is some discrepancy in the reckoning of the years of this era in different authors : the writer of the First Book of the Maccabees dates from Nisan ; the author of the Second Book from Tisri, the beginning of the civil year.

11. “Went there out of Israel wicked men.” The calamities of the Hebrew Church and people proceeded from themselves ; especially from the High Priests Jason, and Menelaus, and Alcimus, and their secularizing partizans. See 2 Macc. iv. 7—32, the best commentary on this passage.

14. “A place of exercise.” A gymnasium for athletes (2 Macc. iv. 9. 12.).

15. “Joined themselves to the heathen.” Yoked themselves to the heathen.

“Were sold.” Sold themselves (1 Kin. i. 20 ; 2 Kin. xvii. 17.).

17. “Entered into Egypt.” Compare Dan. xi. 25—27.

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18 and made war against Ptolemee king of Egypt: but Ptolemee was afraid of him, and fled; and many were wounded to death.

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19 Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt, and he took the spoils thereof.

20 And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and ^ewent up against Israel and Jerusalem ^e Dan. 8. 12. with a great multitude,

21 and ^fentered proudly into the sanctuary, and ^f Dan. 11. 31. took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof,

22 and the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crowns, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, ²all which he ² Or, he *pilled* pulled off. *all things.*

23 He took also the silver and the gold, and the ³precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures ³ Gr. *desirable.* which he found.

24 And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly.

25 Therefore there was great mourning in Israel, in every place where they were;

26 so that the princes and elders mourned, the virgins and young men were made feeble, and the beauty of women was changed.

27 Every bridegroom took up lamentation, and she that sat in the marriage chamber was in heaviness.

28 The land also was moved for the inhabitants thereof, and all the house of Jacob was covered with confusion.

29 And after two years fully expired ⁸the king 168. sent his chief collector of tribute unto the cities of ⁸ 2 Macc. 5. 24.

18. "Ptolemee." Philometor, his own nephew; son of his sister Cleopatra, the queen-mother.

20. "Against Israel." On this invasion of the Holy Land, see the prophecy of Daniel (viii. 12; xi. 31.).

22. "Pouring vessels." Bowls or basins for libations; "vials" (Exod. xxvii. 3.).

29. "His chief collector." Apollonius. Compare 2 Macc. v. 24—27, for the history.

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Juda, who came unto Jerusalem with a great multitude,

30 and spake peaceable words unto them, but *all* was deceit: for when they had given him credence, he fell suddenly upon the city, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people of Israel.

31 And when he had taken the spoils of the city, he set it on fire, and pulled down the houses and walls thereof on every side.

32 But the women and children took they captive, and possessed the cattle.

33 Then builded they the city of David with a great and strong wall, *and* with mighty towers, and made it a strong hold for them.

34 And they put therein a sinful nation, wicked men, and fortified *themselves* therein.

35 They stored it also with armour and victuals, and when they had gathered together the spoils of Jerusalem, they laid them up there, and so they became a sore snare:

36 for it was a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and an evil adversary to Israel.

37 Thus they shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it:

38 insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them: whereupon *the city* was made an habitation of strangers, and became strange to those that were born in her; and her own children left her.

39 Her sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness,
^hher feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach, her honour into contempt.

^h Tobit 2. 6.
2 Macc. 6. 6.

40 As had been her glory, so was her dishonour increased, and her excellency was turned into mourning.

33. "A strong hold." "Acra," or "acropolis" (iv. 2, 6; 2 Macc. iv. 12, 27; v. 5.).

34. "A sinful nation." Heathens.

36. "An evil adversary." In the Greek, "diabolos" = Satan, or enemy. This tower was afterwards destroyed by Simon, brother of Judas Maccabæus (xiii. 49—51.).

37. Ps. lxxix. 1—3.

39. 2 Macc. vi. 6.

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41 Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people,

42 and every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king.

43 Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the sabbath.

44 For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda, that they should follow ²the strange laws of the land,

45 and forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the sabbaths and festival days:

² Or, *the laws and rites of the strangers of the land.*

46 and pollute the sanctuary and holy people:

47 set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts:

48 that they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation:

49 to the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances.

50 And ¹whosoever would not do according to the ¹²Macc. 6. 9. commandment of the king, *he said*, he should die.

41. "That all should be one people." Not that Antiochus abolished different forms of *heathen* worship; he tolerated them, and he claimed for himself on his coins the title of *God*; but, inasmuch as the Hebrew Law was, in his eyes, *intolerant*, because it declared the Lord God of the Hebrew people to be the only true God, and the universal Lord of heaven and earth, and all other gods to be no gods, but idols, Antiochus would not tolerate *it*; but resolved, if possible, to tear it up by the roots, and to destroy it. Such will be the character of Antichrist: tolerant of every form of error in doctrine and ritual; but intolerant of the one true faith and worship of the Blessed Trinity, Three Persons and One God.

The difference of Antichristian policy towards heresy, schism, and infidelity on the one side, and toward the Church of God on the other, arises from the essential difference between Error and Truth. Error is multiform, inclusive, and (as it is called) tolerant; Truth is one, exclusive, and (as it is called) intolerant. The former hates the latter, and would destroy it,—if it could.

43. "Many of the Israelites consented to his religion." Being led away by the evil example of some of their High Priests, especially Jason and Menelaus, and afterwards Alcimus. See ver. 11.

44. "Strange laws of the land." Rather, "laws strange to the land."

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^k 2 Macc. 5. 22.

51 In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and ^k appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Juda to sacrifice, city by city.

52 Then many of the people were gathered unto them, to wit, every one that forsook the law; and so they committed evils in the land;

² Or, And they made Israel hide themselves in holes in every place of succour.

53 ² and ¹ drove the Israelites into secret places, even wheresoever they could flee for succour.

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¹ 2 Macc. 6. 11.

Heb. 11. 38.

See ch. 2. 31,

36, 41.

^m Dan. 11. 31.

54 Now the fifteenth day of *the month* Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up ^m the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side;

55 and burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets.

56 And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire.

³ Gr. *the king's commandment put him to death.*

57 And wheresoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any consented to the law, ³ the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death.

58 Thus did they by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities.

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59 Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God.

60 At which time according to the commandment

54. "The fifteenth day." They began; and completed it on the 25th (iv. 52. 2 Macc. x. 5).

"Casleu." Answering to the latter half of November and the former half of December. Compare iv. 52, 54. 2 Macc. x. 5.

"Abomination of desolation." The phrase of Daniel (xi. 31; xii. 12.). The altar of Zeus Olympius, set up on the great brazen altar of burnt sacrifice in the Temple of Jerusalem. Compare 2 Macc. vi. 2. Matt. xxiv. 15. It was called the "abomination of desolation," because it caused the true worshippers to abominate the place where it was, and so made it desolate.

56. "Books of the law;" and 57. "Book of the testament." A proof that copies of the Pentateuch, and probably of the whole of the Old Testament, were not rare at that time in the Holy Land.

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ⁿ they put to death certain women, ² that had caused their children to be circumcised.

61 And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them.

62 Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing.

63 Wherefore they ^o chose rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: so then they died.

64 And there was very great wrath upon Israel.

CHAPTER II.

6 *Mattathias lamenteth the case of Jerusalem. 24 He slayeth a Jew that did sacrifice to idols in his presence, and the king's messenger also. 34 He and his are assailed upon the sabbath, and make no resistance. 50 He dieth, and instructeth his sons; 66 and maketh their brother Judas Maccabeus general.* 168.

IN those days ³ arose Mattathias *the son of John, the son of Simeon*, a priest of the sons of ^aJoarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin.

62. "Many . . . resolved;" e.g. the courageous aged priest Eleazar (2 Macc. vi.), and the noble-hearted mother and her seven sons (2 Macc. vii.).

64. "Very great wrath." Wrath of Almighty God (see on 2 Kin. iii. 27; below, iii. 8.), on account of the treachery of the time-serving priests and others (v. 11, 43, 52.), who were the cause of the success of the persecutor (see on Dan. xi. 30—34.), as had been proved in the days of Ptolemy Philopator, King of Egypt, who had conquered Antiochus the Great, father of Antiochus Epiphanes, and who attempted to enter the Holy of Holies, but was withstood by the faithful and courageous High Priest Simon, and was baffled in the attempt, B.C. 214. (3 Macc. i. 11; ii. 22. Compare *ibid.* iii., iv., v., vi.); and was also proved afterwards by the victories of the faithful and courageous Judas Maccabæus and his brethren over Antiochus himself. It was God who rewarded the one with His favour; and it was God who punished the others with His "wrath," of which Antiochus was the executioner. Here is another lesson for the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER II.

The Courage of the Priest Mattathias and his Sons.

1. "Modin." On a hill near Lydda (Diospolis), on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa, and visible from the sea (xiii. 29.); probably at El Midjeh.

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ⁿ2 Macc. 6. 10.

² Gr. that had circumcised their children.

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^o 2 Macc. 6. 19. & 7. 1, &c.

³ Or, Mattathias the son of John, &c. arose from Jerusalem, or, out of Jerusalem.

^a 1 Chr. 24. 7.

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² Or, *who was called : and so afterward in the rest.*

³ *Gaddis.*

⁴ Or, *Avaron, or, Abaron : See ch. 6. 43.*

2 And he had five sons, Joannan, ² called ³ Caddis :

3 Simon, called Thassi :

4 Judas, who was called Maccabeus :

5 Eleazar, called ⁴ Avaran : and Jonathan, whose surname was Apphus.

6 And when he saw the blasphemies that were committed in Juda and Jerusalem,

7 he said, Woe is me ! wherefore was I born to see this misery of my people, and of the holy city, and to dwell there, when it was delivered into the hand of the enemy, and the sanctuary into the hand of strangers ?

8 Her temple is become as a man without glory.

^b ch. 1. 23, 24.

9 ^b Her glorious vessels are carried away into captivity, her infants are slain in the streets, her young men with the sword of the enemy.

10 What nation hath not had a part in *her* kingdom, and gotten of her spoils ?

11 All her ornaments are taken away ; of a free woman she is become a bonds slave.

⁵ Or, *holy thing.*

12 And, behold, our ⁵ sanctuary, even our beauty and our glory, is laid waste, and the Gentiles have profaned it.

13 To what end therefore shall we live any longer ?

2. "Joannan" (to whom Jehovah is gracious).

"Caddis," or Gaddi (fortunate).

3. "Thassi" (fervid).

4. "Judas, who was called Maccabeus." Probably so named from the Hebrew "Maccâbah," a hammer. Compare Charles Martel. The Rabbinical derivations, from the initials of supposed Hebrew words on the standard of the Maccabees ("Who among the Gods is like unto thee, "O Lord?"), or from the abbreviation of "Mattathias, Priest, son of "John," are inconsistent with the doubled letter, *c* or *k*, in the name. From Judas, called Maccabæus, his associates and followers in this noble deed especially derived their title, and were called *Maccabees*.

5. "Eleazar" (God is help), "called Avaran," or Savaran (vi. 43.) ; perhaps "the striker," some say with reference to his feat in vi. 43, or the Hebrew Martyrs and Confessors of that age.

"Apphus" (crafty).

After the death of his father, Mattathias, Judas Maccabæus became the captain of the religious patriots of Judah (ii. 66 ; iii. 1.). Judas was succeeded in the chieftainship by his brother Jonathan (ix. 30.) ; Jonathan was followed by his brother Simon (xiii. 1.) ; Simon was slain treacherously (xvi. 16.), and was succeeded by John his son (xvi. 23.).

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14 Then Mattathias and his sons rent their clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourned very sore.

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15 In the mean while the king's officers, such as compelled the people to revolt, came into the city Modin, to make them sacrifice.

16 And when many of Israel came unto them, Mattathias also and his sons came together.

17 Then answered the king's officers, and said to Mattathias on this wise, Thou art a ruler, and an honourable and great man in this city, and strengthened with sons and brethren :

18 now therefore come thou first, and fulfil the king's commandment, like as all the heathen have done, yea, and the men of Juda also, and such as remain at Jerusalem : so shalt thou and thy house be in the number of the king's friends, and thou and thy children shall be honoured with silver and gold, and many rewards.

19 Then Mattathias answered and spake with a loud voice, Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, and give consent to his commandments :

20 yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. c Josh. 24, 15.

21 God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances.

22 We will not hearken to the king's words, to go from our religion, either on the right hand, or the left.

23 Now when he had left speaking these words, there came one of the Jews in the sight of all to sacrifice on the altar which was at Modin, according to the king's commandment.

24 Which thing when Mattathias saw, he was inflamed with zeal, and his reins trembled, neither could he forbear to shew his anger according to judgment : wherefore he ran, and slew him upon the altar.

24. "Neither could he forbear to shew his anger according to judgment." Rather, "and he vented forth his anger according to right." See ver. 29, where the same word occurs. The Alex. MS. has, "he vented forth his anger in his nostrils." Compare Ps. xviii. 8, 15, Bible Version.

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25 Also the king's commissioner, who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed at that time, and the altar he pulled down.

26 Thus dealt he zealously for the law of God, like ^d Num. 25. 7, as ^d Phinees did unto Zambri the son of Salom.
8.

27 And Mattathias cried throughout the city with a loud voice, saying, Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me.

28 So he and his sons fled into the mountains, and left all that ever they had in the city.

29 Then many that sought after justice and judgment went down into the wilderness, to ² dwell there:
² Gr. sit, or, abide.

30 both they, and their children, and their wives, and their cattle; because ³ afflictions increased sore upon them.
³ Gr. evils were multiplied upon them.

31 Now when it was told the king's servants, and ^e ch. 1. 33, 34. ^e the host that was at Jerusalem, in the city of David, that certain men, who had broken the king's commandment, were gone down into ^f the secret places in the wilderness,
^f ch. 1. 53.

32 they pursued after them a great number, and having overtaken them, they camped against them, and made war against them on the sabbath day.

33 And they said unto them, Let that which ye have done hitherto suffice; come forth, and do according to the commandment of the king, and ye shall live.

34 But they said, We will not come forth, neither will we do ^g the king's commandment, to profane the sabbath day.
^g ch. 1. 45.

⁴ Or, the Jews. 35 So then they gave ⁴ them the battle with all speed.

36 Howbeit they answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped the places where they lay hid;

37 but said, Let us die all in our ⁵ innocency: heaven and earth shall testify for us, that ye put us to death wrongfully.
⁵ Gr. soules simply.

38 So they rose up against them in battle on the sabbath, and they slew them, with their wives and children, and their cattle, to the number of a thousand ⁶ people.
⁶ Gr. soules of men.

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39 Now when Mattathias and his friends understood hereof, they mourned for them right sore.

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40 And one of them said to another, If we all do as our brethren have done, and fight not for our lives and laws against the heathen, they will now quickly root us out of the earth.

41 At that time therefore they decreed, saying, Whosoever shall come to make battle with us on the sabbath day, we will fight against him; neither will we die all,^h as our brethren that were murdered in ^{h ver. 38.} the secret places.

42 Then came there unto him a company of Assideans, who were mighty men of Israel, even all such as were voluntarily devoted unto the law.

43 Also all they that fled for persecution joined themselves unto them, and were a stay unto them.

44 So they joined their forces, and smote sinful men in their anger, and wicked men in their wrath: but the rest fled to the heathen for succour.

45 Then Mattathias and his friends went round about, and pulled down the altars:

46 and what children soever they found within the coast of Israel uncircumcised, those they circumcised² valiantly.

² Or, by force.

47 They pursued also after the proud men, and the work prospered in their hand.

48 So they recovered the law out of the hand of the Gentiles, and out of the hand of kings, neither³ suffered they the sinner to triumph.

³ Gr. gave
they the horn
to the sinner.
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49 Now when the time drew near that Mattathias should die, he said unto his sons, Now hath pride and rebuke gotten strength, and the time of destruction, and the wrath of indignation:

50 now therefore, my sons, be ye zealous for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers.

51 Call to remembrance what acts our fathers did in their⁴ time; so shall ye receive great honour and an everlasting name.

⁴ Gr. generations.

42. "Assideans;" literally, the pious or religious, from the Hebrew "Chasidim." Such appear to have been the Rechabites. Compare vii. 13. 2 Macc. xiv. 6.

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ⁱ Gen. 22. 9, 10.
Rom. 4. 3.
James 2. 21,

22, 23.
^k Gen. 41. 40.
ⁱ Num. 25. 13.
Ecclus. 45.

23, 24.
^m Josh. 1. 2.

ⁿ Num. 14. 6,
7, 24.
Josh. 14. 9,
13.

^o 2 Sam. 2. 4.
& 7. 16.

^p 2 Kin. 2. 11.

^q Dan. 3. 16,
17, 18, 26.

^r Dan. 6. 22.

^s Gen. 3. 19.
Ps. 146. 4.

² Or, *fight ye
the battle of
the people.*

52 ⁱ Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness?

53 ^k Joseph in the time of his distress kept the commandment, and was made lord of Egypt.

54 ^l Phinees our father in being zealous and fervent obtained the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.

55 ^m Jesus for fulfilling the word was made a judge in Israel.

56 ⁿ Caleb for bearing witness before the congregation received the heritage of the land.

57 ^o David for being merciful possessed the throne of an everlasting kingdom.

58 ^p Elias for being zealous and fervent for the law was taken up into heaven.

59 ^q Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, by believing were saved out of the flame.

60 ^r Daniel for his innocency was delivered from the mouth of lions.

61 And thus consider ye throughout all ages, that none that put their trust in him shall be overcome.

62 Fear not then the words of a sinful man: for his glory shall be dung and worms.

63 To day he shall be lifted up, and to morrow he shall not be found, because he is ^s returned into his dust, and his thought is come to nothing.

64 Wherefore, ye my sons, be valiant, and shew yourselves men in the behalf of the law; for by it shall ye obtain glory.

65 And, behold, I know that your brother Simon is a man of counsel, give ear unto him alway: he shall be a father unto you.

66 As for Judas Maccabeus, he hath been mighty and strong, even from his youth up: let him be your captain, and ² fight the battle of the people.

67 Take also unto you all those that observe the law. and avenge ye the wrong of your people.

55. "Jesus." Joshua.

61. "Put their trust in him;" i.e. in the Lord. There is a reverential reserve and reticence throughout this book with regard to the Divine NAME, which is often implied in a personal pronoun (as in the Book of Job), in the second or third person. Compare iii. 22, 51, 52; vii. 37; and *Note* on iii. 18.

I. MACCABEES, III.

68 Recompense fully the heathen, and take heed to the commandments of the law.

69 So he blessed them, and was gathered to his fathers.

70 And he died in the hundred forty and sixth year, and his sons buried him in the sepulchres of his fathers at Modin, and all Israel made great lamentation for him.

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CHAPTER III.

1 The valour and fame of Judas Maccabeus. 10 He overthroweth the forces of Samaria and Syria. 27 Antiochus sendeth a great power against him. 44 He and his fall to fasting and prayer, 58 and are encouraged.

THEN his son Judas, called Maccabeus, rose up in his stead.

2 And all his brethren helped him, and so did all they that held with his father, and they fought with cheerfulness the battle of Israel.

3 So he gat his people great honour, and put on a breastplate as a giant, and girt his warlike harness about him, and he made battles, protecting the host with his sword.

4 In his acts he was like a lion, and like a lion's whelp roaring for his prey.

5 For he pursued the wicked, and sought them out, and burnt up those that vexed his people.

6 Wherefore the wicked shrunk for fear of him, and all the workers of iniquity were troubled, because salvation prospered in his hand.

7 He grieved also many kings, and made Jacob glad with his acts, and his memorial is blessed for ever.

8 Moreover he went through the cities of Juda, destroying the ungodly out of them, and turning away wrath from Israel:

9 so that he was renowned unto the utmost part of the earth, and he ²received unto him such as ³Gr. gathered together.

10 Then Apollonius gathered the Gentiles to-

CHAPTER III.

Acts of Judas Maccabæus, B.C. 166--160.

10. "Apollonius." Syrian Governor of Samaria (i. 29. 2 Macc. v. 24.).

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gether, and a great host out of Samaria, to fight against Israel.

11 Which thing when Judas perceived, he went forth to meet him, and so he smote him, and slew him: many also fell down slain, but the rest fled.

12 Wherefore Judas took their spoils, and Apollonius' sword also, and therewith he fought all his life long.

13 Now when Seron, a prince of the army of Syria, heard say that Judas had gathered unto him a multitude and company of the faithful to go out with him to war;

14 he said, I will get me a name and honour in the kingdom; for I will go fight with Judas and them that are with him, who despise the king's commandment.

15 So he made him ready to go up, and there went with him a mighty host of the ungodly to help him, and to be avenged of the children of Israel.

16 And when he came near to the going up of Bethhoron, Judas went forth to meet him with a small company:

17 who, when they saw the host coming to meet them, said unto Judas, How shall we be able, being so few, to fight against so great a multitude *and* so strong, seeing we are ready to faint with fasting all this day?

^a 1 Sam. 14. 6.
² Chr. 14.
11.

18 Unto whom Judas answered, ^aIt is no hard matter for many to be shut up in the hands of a few; and with *the God of* heaven it is all one, to deliver with a great multitude, or a small company:

13. "Seron." The General of the army of Coele-Syria.

16. "Bethhoron." Famous for the victory of Joshua (Josh. x. 10, 11.). Twelve Roman miles North of Jerusalem.

17. "Few." See Dan. xi. 34.

18. "With the God of heaven." The word *God* is not in the Alexandrine MS. (compare below, vii. 41.); and in this book there is a studious reserve as to the word *God*, and for it the word *heaven* is commonly used. See below, vv. 19, 50, 60; iv. 10, 24, 40, 55. The visible glory ("Shechinah") of the Lord was no longer vouchsafed to the eye of the Hebrew people in the Temple, nor was the Divine Will any longer manifested in the *Urim* and *Thummim*; and they were led to look upward to *heaven* as the temple of the Most High, "the Lord

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19 for the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of an host; but strength cometh from heaven.

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20 They come ²against us ³in much pride and iniquity to destroy us, and our wives and children, and to spoil us:

² Or, unto us.
³ Gr. in multitude of pride, or, envy and iniquity.

21 but we fight for our lives and our laws.

22 Wherefore the Lord himself will overthrow them before our face: and as for you, be ye not afraid of them.

23 Now as soon as he had left off speaking, he leapt suddenly upon them, and so Seron and his host was overthrown before him.

24 And they pursued them ⁴from the going down of Bethhoron unto the plain, where were slain about eight hundred men of them; and the residue fled into the land of the Philistines.

⁴ Gr. in the going down.

25 Then began the fear of Judas and his brethren, and an exceeding great dread, to fall upon the nations round about them:

26 insomuch as his fame came unto the king, and all nations talked of the battles of Judas.

27 Now when king Antiochus heard these things, he was full of indignation: wherefore he sent and gathered together all the forces of his realm, *even* a very strong army.

28 He opened also his treasure, and gave his soldiers pay for a year, commanding them to be ready ⁵whenever he should need them.

⁵ Gr. at every need.

29 Nevertheless, when he saw that the money of his treasures failed, and ⁶that the tributes in the country were small, because of the dissension and

⁶ Gr. that the collectors of tribute in the country were few.

“of the heaven and earth.” They gained something by their loss. They were weaned from earthly things; their faith and worship were elevated and universalized; and they were prepared for the Christian Dispensation, as described by our Lord in His words to the woman of Samaria (John iv. 21, 22, 24.), and for the spirit and language of the Lord’s Prayer, “Our Father which art in heaven”—“Thy will be done, “as it is in heaven;” and also for the glory of the heavenly city, of which the beloved disciple speaks, “I saw no temple therein” (Rev. xxi. 22.).

23. “His host.” The Greek word is “parembolē” (compare iv. 30; vi. 40, 41, 42.); the same word as in Heb. xi. 34, where is a reference to the noble acts of the Maccabees.

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² Or, *for the taking away of the laws.*

³ Gr. *that he should not have.*

plague, which he had brought upon the land ²in taking away the laws which had been of old time ;

30 he feared ³that he should not be able to bear the charges any longer, nor to have such gifts to give so liberally as he did before : for he had abounded above the kings that were before him.

31 Wherefore, being greatly perplexed in his mind, he determined to go into Persia, there to take the tributes of the countries, and to gather much money.

32 So he left Lysias, a nobleman, and one of the blood royal, to oversee the affairs of the king from the river Euphrates unto the borders of Egypt :

33 and to bring up his son Antiochus, until he came again.

34 Moreover he delivered unto him the half of his forces, and the elephants, and gave him charge of all things that he would have done, as also concerning them that dwelt in Juda and Jerusalem :

35 *to wit*, that he should send an army against them, to destroy and root out the strength of Israel, and the remnant of Jerusalem, and to take away their memorial from that place ;

36 and that he should place strangers in all their quarters, and divide their land by lot.

37 So the king took the half of the forces that remained, and departed from Antioch, ⁴his royal city, the hundred forty and seventh year ; and having passed the river Euphrates, he went through the high countries.

⁴ Gr. *a city of his kingdom.*

38 Then Lysias chose Ptolemee the son of Dorymenes, and Nicanor, and Gorgias, mighty men of the king's friends :

39 and with them he sent forty thousand footmen, and seven thousand horsemen, to go into the land of Juda, and to destroy it, as the king commanded.

40 So they went forth with all their power, and came and pitched by Emmaus in the plain country.

30. On the profuse liberality of Antiochus, see above, i. 10 ; Dan. xi. 24.

31. "Persia." To spoil the temple there (vi. 1.).

37. "The high countries." Beyond the Euphrates.

38. "Ptolemee," 2 Macc. iv. 45 ; x. 12.

"Nicanor, and Gorgias," iv. 3, 30 ; 2 Macc. x. 14 ; xii. 32.

40. "Emmaus" (not the Emmaus of Luke xxiv. 13.). About 22

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41 And the merchants of the country, hearing the fame of them, took silver and gold very much, with ²servants, and came into the camp to buy the children of Israel for slaves: a power also of Syria and of the land ³of the Philistines joined themselves unto them.

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² Or, *fetters*.

³ Or, *of strangers*.

42 Now when Judas and his brethren saw that miseries were multiplied, and that the forces did encamp themselves in their borders; for they knew how the king had given commandment to destroy the people, and utterly abolish them;

43 they said one to another, Let us restore the decayed estate of our people, and let us fight for our people and the sanctuary.

44 Then was the congregation gathered together, that they might be ready for battle, and that they might pray, and ask mercy and compassion.

45 Now Jerusalem lay void ^bas a wilderness, there was none of her children that went in or out: the sanctuary also was trodden down, and aliens kept the strong hold; the heathen had their habitation in that place; and joy was taken from Jacob, and the pipe with the harp ceased.

^b ch. 1. 38, 39.

46 Wherefore the Israelites assembled themselves together, and came to ⁴Maspha, over against Jerusalem; for ^cin Maspha was the place where they prayed aforetime in Israel.

⁴ Or, *Mitspa*.

^c Judg. 20. 1.

1 Sam. 7. 5.

47 Then they fasted that day, and put on sackcloth, and cast ashes upon their heads, and rent their clothes,

⁵ Or, *for the which the heathen had made diligent search, that they might paint therein the likeness of their idols*.

48 and laid open the book of the law, ⁵wherein the heathen had sought to paint the likeness of their images.

Roman miles from Jerusalem, in the plain of Philistia (the modern *Amwas*). The true reading seems to be, "Emmaum."

41. "Servants." The *Margin* has "fetters." The variety arises from the sameness of sound in Greek of "paidas" (servants) and "pedas" (fetters).

46. "Maspha." Mizpeh, in the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 26.), a celebrated place for national gatherings (Judg. xx. 1. 1 Sam. vii. 5.).

48. "Laid open." As Hezekiah spread the letter of Sennacherib before the Lord (2 Kin. xxix. 14.).

"Wherein the heathen," &c. To render them abominable to the Jews. Compare Lev. xxvi. 1.

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d Num. 6. 2,
13.

49 They brought also the priests' garments, and the firstfruits, and the tithes: and the ^d Nazarites they stirred up, who had accomplished their days.

50 Then cried they with a loud voice toward heaven, saying, What shall we do with these, and whither shall we carry them away?

51 For thy sanctuary is trodden down and profaned, and thy priests are in heaviness, and brought low.

52 And, lo, the heathen are assembled together against us to destroy us: what things they imagine against us, thou knowest.

53 How shall we be able to stand against them, except thou, *O God*, be our help?

54 Then sounded they with trumpets, and cried with a loud voice.

55 And after this Judas ordained captains over the people, *even* captains over thousands, and over hundreds, and over fifties, and over tens.

o Deut. 20. 5,
&c.

56 But as for such as ^e were building houses, or had betrothed wives, or were planting vineyards, or ^f were fearful, those he commanded that they should return, every man to his own house, according to the law.

f Judg. 7. 3.

57 So the camp removed, and pitched upon the south side of Emmaus.

58 And Judas said, Arm yourselves, and be valiant men, and see that ye be in readiness against the morning, that ye may fight with these nations, that are assembled together against us to destroy us and our sanctuary:

59 for it is better for us to die in battle, than to behold the calamities of our people and our sanctuary.

g 2 Sam. 10.
12.

60 Nevertheless, ^g as the will of *God* is in heaven, so let him do.

CHAPTER IV.

6 Judas defeateth the plot, 14 and forces of Gorgias, 23 and spoileth their tents, 34 and overthroweth Lysias. 45 He pulleth down the altar which the heathen had profaned, and setteth up a new: 60 and maketh a wall about Sion.

49. "Nazarites;" Num. vi. 2—21.

56. "According to the law;" Deut. xx. 5, 6.

60. "Of God." Not in the original. See on ver. 18.

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THEN took Gorgias five thousand footmen, and a thousand of the best horsemen, and removed out of the camp by night ;

2 to the end he might rush in upon the camp of the Jews, and smite them suddenly. And the men of the fortress were his guides.

3 Now when Judas heard thereof, he himself removed, and the valiant men with him, that he might smite the king's army which was at Emmaus,

4 while as yet the forces were dispersed from the camp.

5 In the mean season came Gorgias by night into the camp of Judas : and when he found no man there, he sought them in the mountains : for said he, These fellows flee from us.

6 But as soon as it was day, Judas shewed himself in the plain with three thousand men, who nevertheless had neither ² armour nor swords to ² Or, *targels*. their minds.

7 And they saw the camp of the heathen, that it was strong and well harnessed, and compassed round about with horsemen ; and these were expert of war.

8 Then said Judas to the men that were with him, Fear ye not their multitude, neither be ye afraid of their assault.

9 Remember how ^a our fathers were delivered in ^a Ex. 14. 30. the Red sea, when Pharaoh pursued them with an army.

10 Now therefore let us cry unto heaven, if peradventure the Lord will have mercy upon us, and remember the covenant of our fathers, and destroy this host before our face this day :

11 ^b that so all the heathen may know that there ^b 1 Sam. 17. 46. is one who delivereth and saveth Israel.

12 Then the strangers lifted up their eyes, and saw them coming over against them.

13 Wherefore they went out of the camp to battle ; but they that were with Judas sounded their trumpets.

14 So they joined battle, and the heathen being discomfited fled into the plain.

15 Howbeit all the hindmost of them were slain

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² Gr.
Assaremoth.

with the sword: for they pursued them unto ²Gazera, and unto the plains of Idumea, and Azotus, and Jamnia, so that there were slain of them upon a three thousand men.

16 This done, Judas returned again with his host from pursuing them,

17 and said to the people, Be not greedy of the spoils, inasmuch as there is a battle before us,

18 and Gorgias and his host are here by us in the mountain: but stand ye now against our enemies, and overcome them, and after this ye may boldly take the spoils.

19 As Judas was yet speaking these words, there appeared a part of them looking out of the mountain:

20 who when they perceived that the Jews had put their host to flight, and were burning the tents; for the smoke that was seen declared what was done:

21 when therefore they perceived these things, they were sore afraid, and seeing also the host of Judas in the plain ready to fight,

22 they fled every one into the land of strangers.

23 Then Judas returned to spoil the tents, where they got much gold, and silver, and blue silk, and purple of the sea, and great riches.

24 After this they went home, and sung a song of thanksgiving, and praised the Lord in heaven:
^c because ³ it is good, because his mercy *endureth* for ever.

^c Ps. 136. 1.
³ Or, *he*.

25 Thus Israel had a great deliverance that day.

CHAPTER IV.

Victories of Judas Maccabæus over Gorgias and Lysias. Restoration of Temple Service.

15. "Gazera." Called Gezer in Josh. x. 33. On the Southern boundary of Ephraim.

"Idumea." The Alex. MS. has Judæa, and this seems the true reading.

"Azotus." Ashdod in Philistia (Josh. xiii. 3.).

"Jamnia." Jabneel (Josh. xv. 11.).

24. "The Lord." Not in Alex. MS.

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26 Now all the strangers that had escaped came and told Lysias what had happened :

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27 who, when he heard thereof, was confounded and discouraged, because neither such things as he would were done unto Israel, nor such things as the king commanded him were come to pass.

28 The next year therefore following Lysias gathered together threescore thousand choice men of foot, and five thousand horsemen, that he might subdue them.

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29 So they came into Idumea, and pitched their tents at Bethsura, and Judas met them with ten thousand men.

30 And when he saw that mighty army, he prayed and said, Blessed art thou, O Saviour of Israel, ^d who didst quell the violence of the mighty man by the hand of thy servant David, and gavest the host of ^e strangers into the hands of ^e Jonathan the son of Saul, and his armourbearer ;

^d 1 Sam. 17.
50, 51.

^e Or,
Philistines.
^e 1 Sam. 14.
13, 14.

31 shut up this army in the hand of thy people Israel, and let them be confounded in their power and horsemen :

32 make them to be of no courage, and cause the boldness of their strength to ³ fall away, and let them quake at their destruction :

³ Gr. melt.

33 cast them down with the sword of them that love thee, and let all those that know thy name praise thee with thanksgiving.

34 So they joined battle ; and there were slain of the host of Lysias about five thousand men, even before them were they slain.

35 Now when Lysias saw his army put to flight, and the manliness of Judas' soldiers, and how they were ready either to live or die valiantly, he went into Antiochia, and gathered together a company of strangers, and having made his army greater than it was, he purposed to come again into Judea.

29. "Bethsura." On the mountains of Judah (Josh. xv. 58. Compare below, xiv. 33.), on the boundaries of what, in these books, is called Idumæa. Compare v. 65 ; vi. 31.

35. "And having," &c. Or, "in order that, his forces being increased, they might return to Judæa."

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² Or, *repair*.

36 Then said Judas and his brethren, Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let us go up to cleanse and ²dedicate the sanctuary.

37 Upon this all the host assembled themselves together, and went up into mount Sion.

38 And when they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest, or in one of the mountains, yea, and the priests' chambers pulled down;

39 they rent their clothes, and made great lamentation, and cast ashes upon their heads,

40 and fell down flat to the ground upon their faces, and blew an alarm with the trumpets, and cried toward heaven.

^f ch. 1. 34. 41 Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against ^fthose that were in the fortress, until he had cleansed the sanctuary.

42 So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law:

43 who cleansed the sanctuary, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place.

44 And when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned;

45 they thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it: wherefore they pulled it down,

^g ch. 9. 27.
& 14. 41. 46 and laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, ^guntil there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them.

^h Ex. 20. 25.
Deut. 27. 5.
Josh. 8. 31.

47 Then they took whole stones ^haccording to

40. "An alarm with the trumpets." Rather, "the trumpets of "signals," or "alarms" (Num. xxxi. 6.).

46. "Until there should come a prophet." Compare Ezra ii. 63. Especially the prophet pre-announced by Moses (Deut. xviii. 18.): "That prophet that should come into the world" (John vi. 14.). Here is a proof that prophecy had now ceased, as Josephus affirms it did after the time of Malachi, who is called by the Jews "the seal of "the prophets." Compare ix. 27; xiv. 41.

47. "Whole stones." Unhewn (Exod. xx. 35. Deut. xxvii. 6.).

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the law, and built a new altar according to the former;

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48 and made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the temple, and hallowed the courts.

49 They made also new holy vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings, and of incense, and the table.

50 And upon the altar they burned incense, and the lamps that were upon the candlestick they lighted, that they might give light in the temple.

51 Furthermore they set the loaves upon the table, and ²spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they had begun to make.

² Or, spread abroad the hangings, or, hanged up the veils.

52 Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which *is called* the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning,

53 and offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made.

54 Look, at what time and what day the heathen had profaned it, even in that was it dedicated with songs, and citherns, and harps, and cymbals.

55 Then all the people fell upon their faces, worshipping and praising the God of heaven, who had given them good success.

56 And so they kept the dedication of the altar

49. "Altar of burnt offerings." The word "burnt offerings" is not found in some editions: *that altar* was not in the sanctuary ("naos"), and Judas had already set up the altar of burnt offering (ver. 47.).

50. "They lighted." Not from common fire, but by striking a light (2 Macc. x. 3.).

51. "The veils;" i.e. the veil of the sanctuary, and of the Holy of Holies.

52. "Casleu." See i. 54. This was in B.C. 165.

54. "Citherns, and harps." "Harps and lutes." Compare 1 Sam. x. 5.

56. "The dedication." In the Greek here, and in ver. 59, where it is said to have been appointed for eight days, called "enkainismos,"

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² Or, *peace*
offerings.

³ Or,
dedicated.

⁴ Or, *made*
doors for
them.

eight days, and offered burnt offerings with gladness, and sacrificed the sacrifice of ² deliverance and praise.

57 They decked also the forefront of the temple with crowns of gold, and with shields; and the gates and the chambers they ³ renewed, and ⁴ hanged doors upon them.

58 Thus was there very great gladness among the people, for that the reproach of the heathen was put away.

59 Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness.

1 ch. 1. 31.

60 At that time also they builded up the mount Sion with high walls and strong towers round about, lest the Gentiles should come and tread it down, ¹ as they had done before.

61 And they set there a garrison to keep it, and fortified Bethsura to preserve it; that the people might have a defence against Idumea.

CHAPTER V.

3 Judas smiteth the children of Esau, Beaz, and Ammon. 17 Simon is sent into Galilee. 25 The exploits of Judas in Galaad. 51 He destroyeth Ephron, for denying him to pass through it. 56 Divers, that in Judas' absence would fight with their enemies, are slain.

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NOW when the nations round about heard that the altar was built, and the sanctuary renewed as before, it displeased them very much.

2 Wherefore they thought to destroy the generation of Jacob that was among them, and thereupon they began to slay and destroy the people.

3 Then Judas fought against the children of Esau

—in John x. 22, called “enkainia,”—the verb occurs in the next verse (compare 2 Macc. i. 9.)—and honoured with the presence of Christ. This festival, and that of Purim, instituted by Esther and Mordecai (Esth. ix. 29—32.), are examples of ceremonial observances instituted in the Church of God by human authority (*Hooker*).

“The sacrifice of deliverance and praise.” Rather, “sacrifice of “peace offering and thanksgiving.”

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in Idumea at ² Arabattine, because they besieged Israel: and he gave them a great overthrow, and abated their courage, and took their spoils.

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4 Also he remembered the ³injury of the children of Bean, who had been a snare and an offence unto the people, in that they lay in wait for them in the ways.

² Or, *Arabattine*, or, *Arabattan*, or, *Akrabattine*.

5 He shut them up therefore in the towers, and encamped against them, and destroyed them utterly, and burned the towers of that *place* with fire, and all that were therein.

³ Or, *malice*.

⁴ Or, *Hakan*, Gen. 36. 27. Num. 33. 31, 32.

6 Afterward he passed over to the children of Ammon, where he found a mighty power, and much people, with Timotheus their captain.

7 So he fought many battles with them, till at length they were discomfited before him; and he smote them.

8 And when he had taken Jazar, with the towns belonging thereto, he returned into Judea.

9 Then the heathen that were at Galaad assembled themselves together against the Israelites that were in their quarters, to destroy them; but they fled to the fortress of Dathema,

10 and sent letters unto Judas and his brethren, The heathen that are round about us are assembled together against us to destroy us:

11 and they are preparing to come and take the fortress whereunto we are fled, Timotheus being captain of their host.

CHAPTER V

Victories of Judas Maccabæus (and his brother Simon): in Idumæa, Gilead; in Galilee and Judæa.

3. "Arabattine." On the South-east frontier of Palestine, called the ascent of Akraabbim, or "scorpions" (Num. xxxiv. 4. Josh. xv. 3. Judg. i. 36.).

4. "Children of Bean." Perhaps dwellers in Bean, South-east of Hebron. Some suppose Bean to be the name of an Idumean chief.

5. "Destroyed them." Devoted them to destruction.

6. "Ammon." N.E. of the Dead Sea, between Arnon and Jabbok.

8. "Jazar." Fifteen Roman miles North of Heshbon. See Num. xxxi. 32.

"Towns belonging thereto." Literally, "her daughters" (Num. xxi. 25, 32.).

9. "Galaad." Gilead on the East of Jordan. See ver. 26.

"Dathema." Conjectured to be Damch in the Lejja district.

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² Or, *Tubin*.

12 Come now therefore, and deliver us from their hands, for many of us are slain :

13 yea, all our brethren that were in the places of ²Tobie are put to death : their wives and their children also they have carried away captives, and borne away their stuff ; and they have destroyed there about a thousand men.

14 While these letters were yet reading, behold, there came other messengers from Galilee with their clothes rent, who reported on this wise,

15 and said, They of Ptolemais, and of Tyrus, and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles, are assembled together against us to consume us.

16 Now when Judas and the people heard these words, there assembled a great congregation together, to consult what they should do for their brethren, that were in trouble, and assaulted of them.

17 Then said Judas unto Simon his brother, Choose thee out men, and go and deliver thy brethren that are in Galilee, for I and Jonathan my brother will go into the country of Galaad.

18 So he left Joseph the *son* of Zacharias, and Azarias, captains of the people, with the remnant of the host in Judea to keep it.

19 Unto whom he gave commandment, saying, Take ye the charge of this people, and see that ye make not war against the heathen until the time that we come again.

20 Now unto Simon were given three thousand men to go into Galilee, and unto Judas eight thousand men for the country of Galaad.

21 Then went Simon into Galilee, where he fought many battles with the heathen, so that the heathen were discomfited by him.

22 And he pursued them unto the gate of Ptolemais ; and there were slain of the heathen about three thousand men, whose spoils he took.

³ Or, *captive Jews*.

23 And ³those that were in Galilee, and in Ar-

13. "Tobie." The land of Tob, between the country of Ammon and Syria (Judg. xi. 3. 2 Sam. x. 6. 2 Macc. xii. 17.).

15. "Ptolemais." Akko (Judg. i. 31.), now Acre, or St. Jean d'Acre ; from the Johannites, so called from St. John the Baptist.

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battis, with their wives and their children, and all that they had, took he away *with him*, and brought them into Judea with great joy.

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24 Judas Maccabeus also and his brother Jonathan went over Jordan, and travelled three days' journey in the wilderness,

25 where they met with the Nabathites, who came unto them in a peaceable manner, and told them every thing that had happened to their brethren in the land of Galaad :

26 and how that many of them were shut up in ² Bosora, and Bosor, and Alema, ³ Casphor, Maked, and Carnaim ; all these cities are strong and great :

27 and that they were shut up in the rest of the cities of the country of Galaad, and that against to morrow ⁴ they had appointed to bring their host against the forts, and to take them, and to destroy them all in one day.

28 Hereupon Judas and his host turned suddenly by the way of the wilderness unto ⁵ Bosora ; and when he had won the city, he slew all the males with the edge of the sword, and took all their spoils, and burned the city with fire.

29 From whence he removed by night, and went till he came to the fortress.

30 And betimes in the morning they ⁶ looked up, and, behold, there was an innumerable people bearing ladders and other engines of war, to take the fortress : for ⁷ they assaulted them.

31 When Judas therefore saw that the battle was begun, and that the cry of the city went up to heaven, with trumpets, and a great sound,

23. "Arbattis." The site uncertain ; some suppose it to be the Nabatha of Josephus (*B. J.* XI. xiv. 5.), between Cæsarea and Samaria.

25. "Nabathites." Called from Nebaioth, eldest son of Ishmael (*Gen.* xxv. 13.), in the East of Jordan.

26. "Bosora." Bezer in Moab (*Deut.* iv. 43. *Josh.* xx. 8.). On these cities, see ver. 36.

"Alema." Not known.

"Casphor." See 2 Macc. xii. 13. Perhaps on the Eastern side of the Sea of Galilee.

"Maked." Perhaps in Hauran.

"Carnaim." The ancient residence of Og, King of Bashan (*Deut.* i. 4.). Compare *Gen.* xiv. 5.

² Or, *Bosorra.*
³ Or, *Chascor,*
or, *Casphon,*
as ver. 36.

⁴ Or, *the*
heathen.

⁵ Or, *Bosor.*

⁶ Or, *lift up*
their eyes.

⁷ Or, *the*
heathen
assaulted
the Jews.

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32 he said unto his host, Fight this day for your brethren.

33 So he went forth behind them in three companies, who sounded their trumpets, and cried with prayer.

34 Then the host of Timotheus, knowing that it was Maccabeus, fled from him : wherefore he smote them with a great slaughter ; so that there were killed of them that day about eight thousand men.

35 This done, Judas turned aside to Maspha ; and after he had assaulted it, he took it, and slew all the males therein, and received the spoils thereof, and burnt it with fire.

* See ver. 26.

36 From thence went he, and took * Casphon, Maged, Bosor, and the other cities of the country of Galaad.

37 After these things gathered Timotheus another host, and encamped against Raphon beyond the brook.

38 So Judas sent *men* to espy the host, who brought him word, saying, All the heathen that be round about us are assembled unto them, even a very great host.

39 He hath also hired the Arabians to help them, and they have pitched their tents beyond the brook, ready to come and fight against thee. Upon this Judas went to meet them.

40 Then Timotheus said unto the captains of his host, When Judas and his host come near the brook, if he pass over first unto us, we shall not be able to withstand him ; for he will mightily prevail against us :

41 but if he be afraid, and camp beyond the river, we shall go over unto him, and prevail against him.

42 Now when Judas came near the brook, he caused the scribes of the people to remain by the

35. "Maspha." Mizpeh, supposed by some to be Mizpeh in Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3.); the name, signifying "watch-tower," is of common occurrence.

37. "Raphon beyond the brook." Jabbok (Gen. xxxii. 24.), near Ashtaroth Karnaim (ver. 43.).

42. "The scribes." Who had charge of the muster-roll ; and carried despatches from the generals.

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brook: unto whom he gave commandment, saying, Suffer no man to remain in the camp, but let all come to the battle.

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43 So he went first over unto them, and all the people after him: then all the heathen, being discomfited before him, cast away their weapons, and fled unto the temple that was at Carnaim.

44 But ²they took the city, and burned the temple with all that were therein. Thus was Carnaim subdued, neither could they stand any longer before Judas. ² *Judas and his company.*

45 Then Judas gathered together all the Israelites that were in the country of Galaad, from the least unto the greatest, even their wives, and their children, and their stuff, a very great host, to the end they might come into the land of Judea.

46 Now when they came unto Ephron, (this was a great city in the way as they should go, very well fortified) they could not turn from it, either on the right hand or the left, but must needs pass through the midst of it.

47 Then they of the city shut them out, and stopped up the gates with stones.

48 Whereupon Judas sent unto them in peaceable manner, saying, Let us pass through your land to go into our own country, and none shall do you any hurt; we will only pass through on foot: howbeit they would not open unto him.

49 Wherefore Judas commanded a proclamation to be made throughout the host, that every man should pitch his tent in the place where he was.

50 So the soldiers pitched, and assaulted the city all that day and all that night, till at the length the city was delivered into his hands:

51 who then slew all the males with the edge of the sword, and rased the city, and took the spoils thereof, and passed through the city over them that were slain.

52 After this went they over Jordan into the great plain before Bethsan.

44. "Temple." See 2 Macc. xii. 26.

46. "Ephron." In Peræa.

52. "The great plain." Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. "Bethsan." Now "Beisan," called by the Greeks Scythopolis (2 Macc. xii. 29.); N.E. of Mount Gilboa. See Josh. xvii. 12.

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² Or, *went*
hindmost,
Num. 10. 25.

³ Or, *com-*
forted, or,
encouraged.

⁴ Or, *peace*
offerings,
Jos. Antiq.
12. 12.

53 And Judas gathered together those that ²came behind, and ³exhorted the people all the way through, till they came into the land of Judea.

54 So they went up to mount Sion with joy and gladness, where they offered ⁴burnt offerings, because not one of them were slain until they had returned in peace.

55 Now what time as Judas and Jonathan were in the land of Galaad, and Simon his brother in Galilee before Ptolemais,

56 Joseph the son of Zacharias, and Azarias, captains of the garrisons, heard of the valiant acts and warlike deeds which they had done.

57 Wherefore they said, Let us also get us a name, and go fight against the heathen that are round about us.

58 So when they had given charge unto the garrison that was with them, they went toward Jamnia.

59 Then came Gorgias and his men out of the city ⁵to fight against them.

⁵ Gr. *to meet*
them in
battle.

60 And so it was, that Joseph and Azarias were put to flight, and pursued unto the borders of Judea: and there were slain that day of the people of Israel about two thousand men.

61 Thus was there a great overthrow among the children of Israel, because they were not obedient unto Judas and his brethren, but thought to do some valiant act.

62 Moreover these men came not of the seed of those, by whose hand deliverance was given unto Israel.

63 Howbeit the man Judas and his brethren were greatly renowned in the sight of all Israel, and of all the heathen, wheresoever their name was heard of;

64 insomuch as the people assembled unto them with joyful acclamations.

57. "Let us also get us a name." Said in a spirit of vainglory, like that of the builders of Babel (Gen. xi. 4.), and therefore not blessed by God. Observe the contrast: Judas, who fought in faith, had not lost one man (ver. 54.), but these boasters lost 2,000 (ver. 60.).

58. "Jamnia." In Philistia (iv. 15; x. 69.), near Joppa. See 2 Chr. xxvi. 6.

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65 Afterward went Judas forth with his brethren, and fought against the children of Esau in the land toward the south, where he smote Hebron, and the ² towns thereof, and pulled down the fortress of it, and burned the towers thereof round about.

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² Gr.
daughters.

66 From thence he removed to go into the land of the Philistines, and passed through Samaria.

³ Gr.
strangers.

67 At that time certain priests, desirous to shew their valour, were slain in battle, for that they went out to fight unadvisedly.

68 So Judas turned to Azotus in the land of the Philistines, and when he had pulled down their altars, and burned their carved images with fire, and spoiled their cities, he returned into the land of Judea.

CHAPTER VI.

8 Antiochus dieth, 12 and confesseth that he is plagued for the wrong done to Jerusalem. 20 Judas besiegeth those in the tower at Jerusalem. 28 They procure Antiochus the younger to come into Judea. 51 He besiegeth Zion, 60 and maketh peace with Israel; 62 yet overthroweth the wall of Zion.

ABOUT that time king Antiochus travelling through the high countries heard say, that Elymais in the country of Persia was a city greatly renowned for riches, silver, and gold;

2 and that there was in it a very rich temple, wherein were ⁴ coverings of gold, and breastplates, ⁴ Or, shields, and ⁵ shields, which Alexander, son of Philip, the ⁵ Or, armour, Macedonian king, who reigned first among the Grecians, had left there.

3 Wherefore he came and sought to take the city, and to spoil it; but he was not able, because they of the city, having had warning thereof,

CHAPTER VI.

The Death of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Compare here the prophecy of Daniel, Dan. viii. 10, 23—25; and the history in 2 Macc. ix. 1—28.

1. "High countries." See iii. 31, 37.

"Elymais." Perhaps we ought to read "in Elymais," which was a province, not a city, of Persia; in 2 Macc. ix. 1 the city is said to have been Persepolis.

2. "Temple." Of Artemis, according to Polybius (xxxi. 11.). He plundered also a temple of Aphrodite in Elymais, according to Appian (*Syr.*, cap. lxvi.).

"Coverings." Armour, as the word is rendered in iv. 6; votive ornaments and trophies.

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4 rose up against him in battle : so he fled, and departed thence with great heaviness, and returned to Babylon.

5 Moreover there came one who brought him tidings into Persia, that the armies, which went against the land of Judea, were put to flight :

6 and that Lysias, who went forth first with a great power, was driven away of the Jews ; and that they were made strong by the armour, and power, and store of spoils, which they had gotten of the armies, whom they had destroyed :

^a ch. 1. 54.

7 also that they had pulled down ^athe abomination, which he had set up upon the altar in Jerusalem, and that they had compassed about the sanctuary with high walls, as before, and his city Bethsura.

8 Now when the king heard these words, he was astonished and sore moved : whereupon he laid him down upon his bed, and fell sick for grief, because it had not befallen him as he looked for.

9 And there he continued many days : for his grief was ever more and more, and he made account that he should die.

10 Wherefore he called for all his friends, and said unto them, The sleep is gone from mine eyes, and my heart faileth for very care.

11 And I thought with myself, Into what tribulation am I come, and how great a flood *of misery* is it, wherein now I am ! for I was bountiful and beloved in my power.

^b ch. 1. 21, &c.

^c ch. 1. 57.

12 But now I remember the evils that I did at Jerusalem, and that ^bI took all the vessels of gold and silver that were therein, and ^csent to destroy the inhabitants of Judea without a cause.

13 I perceive therefore that for this cause these troubles are come upon me, and, behold, I perish through great grief in a strange land.

4. "To Babylon." Not that he reached it; for he died at Tabæ in Persia (*Polyb.*).

13. "For this cause." Polybius (xxxi. 11.) affirms that he was stung with remorse for his sacrilegious designs against a heathen temple. This assertion does not exclude the fact here stated.

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14 Then called he for Philip, one of his friends, whom he made ruler over all his realm,

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15 and gave him the crown, and his robe, and his signet, to the end ² he should bring up his son Antiochus, and nourish him up for the kingdom.

² Or, he
should take
his son
Antiochus
to him.

16 So king Antiochus died there in the hundred forty and ninth year.

164.
Nisan.

17 Now when Lysias knew that the king was dead, he set up Antiochus his son, whom he had brought up being young, to reign in his stead, and his name he called Eupator.

18 About this time they that were in the tower shut up the Israelites round about the sanctuary, and sought always their hurt, and the strengthening of the heathen.

cir. 163.

19 Wherefore Judas, purposing to destroy them, called all the people together to besiege them.

20 So they came together, and besieged them in the hundred and fiftieth year, and he made mounts for shot against them, and *other* engines.

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21 Howbeit certain of them that were besieged got forth, unto whom some ungodly men of Israel joined themselves :

22 and they went unto the king, and said, How long will it be ere thou execute judgment, and avenge our brethren ?

23 We have been willing to serve thy father, and to do as he would have us, and to obey his commandments ;

24 for which cause they of our nation besiege the tower, and are alienated from us : moreover ^d as many of us as they could light on they slew, and spoiled our inheritance.

^d ch. 5. 22,
44, 51.

14. "Philip." A Phrygian, who had been brought up with Antiochus, and made governor of Judæa (2 Macc. v. 22 ; viii. 8.). He was a traitor (vv. 55, 63.) ; and on his subsequent history, see 2 Macc. ix. 29. *Josephus*, XII. ix. 7.

16. "Died there." At Tabæ, in the Northern region of Persia, called "Parætacene ultima" (*Polybius*, *Curtius*, v. 13.). See the prophecy in Dan. viii. 25, "he shall be broken without hand ;" i.e. by no human power, but by visitation of God.

17. "Eupator." So called, says Appian (*Syr.* 46.), for his father's valour. He was nine years old then (*Appian*) ; Eusebius says fourteen.

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• ch. 4. 61.

25 Neither have they stretched out their hand against us only, but also against all their borders.

26 And, behold, this day are they besieging the tower at Jerusalem, to take it: the sanctuary also and ° Bethsura have they fortified.

27 Wherefore if thou dost not prevent them quickly, they will do greater things than these, neither shalt thou be able to rule them.

28 Now when the king heard this, he was angry, and gathered together all his friends, and the captains of his army, and those that had charge of the horse.

29 There came also unto him from other kingdoms, and from isles of the sea, bands of hired soldiers.

30 So that the number of his army was an hundred thousand footmen, and twenty thousand horsemen, and two and thirty elephants exercised in battle.

31 These went through Idumea, and pitched against Bethsura, which they assaulted many days, making engines of war; but they of *Bethsura* came out, and burned them with fire, and fought valiantly.

32 Upon this Judas removed from the tower, and pitched in Bathzacharias, over against the king's camp.

33 Then the king rising very early marched fiercely with his host toward Bathzacharias, where his armies made them ready to battle, and sounded the trumpets.

34 And to the end they might provoke the elephants to fight, they shewed them the blood of grapes and mulberries.

35 Moreover they divided the beasts among the armies, and for every elephant they appointed a thousand men, armed with coats of mail, and with helmets of brass on their heads; and beside this, for

32. "Bathzacharias." About seven miles North of Jerusalem; now called Beit Sakarieh.

34. "They shewed them the blood of grapes and mulberries." To stimulate them to battle. Compare *Ælian de Animal.* xiii. 6. 3 Macc. v. 3.

35. "A thousand men." Infantry; to protect the elephants, and to accustom them to distinguish their friends from their foes. See Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, art. "Elephant." Compare *Liv.* xxxvii. 40. *Q. Curt.* viii. 12. 7.

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every beast were ordained five hundred horsemen of the best.

36 These were ready at every occasion: wheresoever the beast was, and whithersoever the beast went, they went also, neither departed they from him.

37 And upon the beasts were there strong towers of wood, which covered every one of them, and were girt fast unto them with devices: there were also upon every one two and thirty strong men, that fought upon them, beside the Indian that ruled him.

38 As for the remnant of the horsemen, they set them on this side and that side at the two parts of the host, ² giving them signs what to do, and being harnessed all over amidst the ranks.

39 Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and brass, the mountains glistened therewith, and shined like lamps of fire.

40 So part of the king's army being spread upon the high mountains, and part on the valleys below, they marched on safely and in order.

41 Wherefore all that heard the noise of their multitude, and the marching of the company, and the rattling of the harness, were moved: for the army was very great and mighty.

42 Then Judas and his host drew near, and entered into battle, and there were slain of the king's army six hundred men.

43 ¶ ^f Eleazar also, *surnamed* Savaran, perceiving ^f ch. 2. 5. that one of the beasts, armed with royal harness, was higher than all the rest, and supposing that the king was upon him,

44 put himself in jeopardy, to the end he might deliver his people, and get him a perpetual name:

36. "At every occasion." Or, beforehand.

37. "Two and thirty strong men." Rather, "two or three" (*Michaelis*). But see below, 2 Macc. xiii. 15.

38. "Giving them signs . . . the ranks." Rather, "scaring off" (the enemy), "and sheltering themselves in the phalanxes."

43. "Eleazar." Brother of Judas Maccabæus (see ii. 5.), called "Avaran." See *ibid*.

"And supposing." Rather, and that "it" (the elephant) "had the appearance of the king being upon him."

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² Or, stirring them up, and being compassed with the ranks, or, defended with the valleys.

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² Or, so that
he cut them
in pieces.

45 wherefore he ran upon him courageously through the midst of the battle, slaying on the right hand and on the left, ²so that they were divided from him on both sides.

46 Which done, he crept under the elephant, and thrust him under, and slew him: whereupon the elephant fell down upon him, and there he died.

47 Howbeit *the rest of the Jews* seeing the strength of the king, and the violence of his forces, turned away from them.

48 ¶ Then the king's army went up to Jerusalem ³Or, in Judea. to meet them, and the king pitched his tents ³ against Judea, and against mount Sion.

49 But with them that were in Bethsura he made peace: ⁴for they came out of the city, because they had no victuals there to endure the siege, it being a year of rest to the land.

⁴ Add out of
Josephus,
and they
yielded
themselves.

50 So the king took Bethsura, and set a garrison there to keep it.

51 As for the sanctuary, he besieged it many days: and ⁵set there artillery with engines and instruments to cast fire and stones, and pieces to cast darts and slings.

⁵ Or, made
there mounts
for shot.

⁶ Or, the Jews. 52 Whereupon ⁶they also made engines against their engines, and held them battle a long season.

53 Yet at the last, their vessels being without victuals, (for that it was the seventh year, and they in Judea, that were delivered from the Gentiles, had eaten up the residue of the store;)

54 there were but a few left in the sanctuary, because the famine did so prevail against them, that they were fain to disperse themselves, every man to his own place.

55 At that time Lysias heard say, that Philip, whom Antiochus the king, whiles he lived, had appointed to bring up his son Antiochus, that he might be king,

56 was returned out of Persia and Media, and the king's host also that went with him, and that he sought to take unto him the ruling of the affairs.

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57 Wherefore he went in all haste, and said to the king and the captains of the host and the company, We decay daily, and our victuals are but small, and the place we lay siege unto is strong, and the affairs of the kingdom lie upon us :

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58 now therefore let us ² be friends with these men, and make peace with them, and with all their nation ;

² Gr. give hands.

59 and covenant with them, that they shall live after their laws, as they did before : for they are therefore displeased, and have done all these things, because we abolished their laws.

60 So the king and the princes were content : wherefore he sent unto them to make peace ; and they accepted thereof.

61 Also the king and the princes made an oath unto them : whereupon they went out of the strong hold.

62 Then the king entered into mount Sion ; but when he saw the strength of the place, he brake his oath that he had made, and gave commandment to pull down the wall round about.

63 Afterward departed he in all haste, and returned unto Antiochia, where he found Philip to be master of the city : so he fought against him, and took the city by force.

CHAPTER VII.

¹ Antiochus is slain, and Demetrius reigneth in his stead. ⁵ Alcimus would be high priest, and complaineth of Judas to the king. ¹⁶ He slayeth threescore Assideans. ⁴³ Nicanor is slain, and the king's forces are defeated by Judas. ⁴⁹ The day of this victory is kept holy every year.

IN the hundred and one and fiftieth year ^a Demetrius the son of Seleucus departed from Rome,

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^a 2 Macc. 14. 1.

58. "Let us be friends." Thus God overruled the strifes of their enemies to the peace of His people.

CHAPTER VII.

Death of Antiochus Eupator. Treachery of the High Priest Alcimus. Victories of Judas Maccabæus over the Syrian Forces under Nicanor, who is slain.

1. "Demetrius the son of Seleucus." The elder brother of Antiochus Epiphanes, and therefore the rightful heir of the throne.

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² Tripolis,
Jos. Ant.
lib. 12.
cap. 16.

³ Gr. house
of the king-
dom of his
father.

and came up with a few men unto ²a city of the sea coast, and reigned there.

2 And as he entered into the ³palace of his ancestors, so it was, that his forces had taken Antiochus and Lysias, to bring them unto him.

3 Wherefore, when he knew it, he said, Let me not see their faces.

4 So his host slew them. Now when Demetrius was set upon the throne of his kingdom,

5 there came unto him all the wicked and ungodly men of Israel, having Alcimus, who was desirous to be high priest, for their captain :

6 and they accused the people to the king, saying, Judas and his brethren have slain all thy friends, and driven us out of our own land.

7 Now therefore send some man whom thou trustest, and let him go and see what havock he hath made among us, and in the king's land, and let him punish them with all them that aid them.

8 Then the king chose Bacchides, a friend of the king, who ruled beyond the flood, and was a great man in the kingdom, and faithful to the king.

9 And him he sent with that wicked Alcimus, whom he made high priest, and commanded that he should take vengeance of the children of Israel.

10 So they departed, and came with a great power

“A city of the sea coast.” Tripolis (2 Macc. xiv. 1.). See below, xi. 7.

2. “Palace of his ancestors.” Antioch.

5. “Alcimus.” A leader of the Hellenizing party, who aspired to the high-priesthood. His Hebrew name was Eliakim, or “Joiachim” (as he is called in some MSS., here and passim), which he Grecised into “Alcimus” (valiant), as the High Priest Jesus became Jason, and Onias became Menelaus. According to 2 Macc. xiv. 3, 7, he was already high priest after Menelaus.

Thus traitors and apostate priests became the accusers of the brethren, especially of the heroic patriot and warrior Judas Maccabæus, to the Syrians, as the Jews accused Jesus of sedition to Pilate, the Roman governor (St. Luke xxiii. 5.).

8. “The flood.” Euphrates.

9. “Whom he made high priest.” Alcimus, who was of the seed of Aaron (ver. 14.), was raised to the high-priesthood at Jerusalem by the King of Syria, the enemy of the Jews, in order that he might destroy his own countrymen. On his acts and death, see below (ix. 54—56.).

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into the land of Judea, where they sent messengers to Judas and his brethren with peaceable words deceitfully.

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11 But they gave no heed to their words; for they saw that they were come with a great power.

12 Then did there assemble unto Alcimus and Bacchides a company of ² scribes, to require justice.

² Or, officers,
governors,
chief men,
or, men in
authority.

13 Now the Assideans were the first among the children of Israel that sought peace of them:

14 for said they, One that is a priest of the seed of Aaron is come with this army, and he will do us no wrong.

15 So he spake unto them peaceably, and sware unto them, saying, We will procure the harm neither of you nor your friends.

16 Whereupon they believed him: howbeit he took of them threescore men, and slew them in one day, according to the words which he wrote,

17 ^b The flesh of thy saints *have they cast out*, and their blood have they shed round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them. ^b Ps. 79. 2, 3.

18 Wherefore the fear and dread of them fell upon all the people, who said, There is neither truth nor ³ righteousness in them; for they have broken the covenant and oath that they made. ³ Gr.
judgment.

19 After this removed Bacchides from Jerusalem, and pitched his tents in Bezeth, where he sent and took many of the men that had forsaken him, and certain of the people also, and when he had slain them, *he cast them* into the great pit. ^c Jer. 41. 7.

20 Then committed he the country to Alcimus, and left with him a power to aid him: so Bacchides went to the king.

21 But Alcimus ⁴ contended for the high priesthood. ⁴ Or, labour-
ed to defend
his high
priesthood.

22 And unto him resorted all such as troubled

12. "Scribes." Those of the Assideans (see ii. 42.) who devoted themselves to the study and exposition of the Hebrew Scriptures.

16. "According to the words which he wrote." That is, according to the prophecy which he, the author of that psalm (Ps. lxx. 2.), wrote as a *Scripture*. The writer of this book is quoting that psalm as a part of the holy prophetic writings.

19. "Bezeth." Near Jerusalem; the precise site is not known.

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the people, who, after they had gotten the land of Juda into their power, did much hurt in Israel.

23 Now when Judas saw all the mischief that Alcimus and his company had done among the Israelites, even above the heathen,

² Or, *fled from him to the enemy.*

³ Or, *invade the country.*

24 he went out into all the coasts of Judea round about, and took vengeance of them that had ² revolted from him, so that they durst no more ³ go forth into the country.

⁴ Or, *were grown very strong.*

⁵ Gr. *to abide them.*

25 On the other side, when Alcimus saw that Judas and his company ⁴ had gotten the upper hand, and knew that he was not able ⁵ to abide their force, he went again to the king, and said all the worst of them that he could.

^d 2 Macc. 14. 12.

26 ^d Then the king sent Nicanor, one of his honourable princes, a man that bare deadly hate unto Israel, with commandment to destroy the people.

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27 So Nicanor came to Jerusalem with a great force; and sent unto Judas and his brethren deceitfully with ⁶ friendly words, saying,

⁶ Gr. *peaceable.*

28 Let there be no battle between me and you; I will come with a few men, that I may ⁷ see you in peace.

⁷ Gr. *see your faces.*

29 He came therefore to Judas, and they saluted one another peaceably. Howbeit the enemies were prepared to take away Judas by violence.

30 Which thing after it was known to Judas, *to wit*, that he came unto him with deceit, he was sore afraid of him, and would see his face no more.

⁸ Gr. *meet Judas in battle.*

⁹ Or, *Capharsalama.*

31 Nicanor also, when he saw that his counsel was discovered, went out to ⁸ fight against Judas beside ⁹ Capharsalama:

32 where there were slain of Nicanor's side about five thousand men, and *the rest* fled into the city of David.

33 After this went Nicanor up to mount Sion, and there came out of the sanctuary certain of the priests and certain of the elders of the people, to salute him

23. "Even above the heathen." Renegade priests do more harm to God's Church than infidels.

27. "So Nicanor came." See 2 Macc. xiv. 12; xv. 36.

31. "Capharsalama." South of Jerusalem.

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peaceably, and to shew him the burnt sacrifice that was offered for the king.

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cir 161.

34 But he mocked them, and laughed at them, and ²abused them shamefully, and spake proudly,

² Gr. defiled them.

35 and sware in his wrath, saying, Unless Judas and his host be now delivered into my hands, if ever I come again ³in safety, I will burn up this house: and with that he went out in a great rage.

³ Gr. in peace.

36 Then the priests entered in, and stood before the altar and the temple, weeping, and saying,

37 Thou, *O Lord*, didst choose this house to be called by thy name, and to be a house of prayer and petition for thy people:

38 be avenged of this man and his host, and let them fall by the sword: remember their blasphemies, and suffer them not to continue any longer.

39 So Nicanor went out of Jerusalem, and pitched his tents in Bethhoron, where an host out of Syria met him.

40 But Judas pitched in Adasa with three thousand men, and there he prayed, saying,

41 *O Lord*, when they that were sent from the king of the Assyrians blasphemed, thine angel went out, and smote an hundred fourscore and five thousand of them.

^e 2 Kin. 19. 35.
Is. 37. 36.
Ecclus. 48. 21.
2 Macc. 8. 19. & 15. 22.

42 Even so destroy thou this host before us this day, that the rest may know that he hath spoken blasphemously against thy sanctuary, and judge thou him according to his wickedness.

43 So the thirteenth day of the month Adar the hosts joined battle: but Nicanor's host was discomfited, and he himself was first slain in the battle.

33. "Burnt sacrifice that was offered for the king." Compare Ezra vi. 10. Jer. xxix. 7. The Jews were friendly even to those whom they resisted, when fighting against God.

34. "Abused them." Polluted them, by some insulting and defiling actions and words.

39. "Bethhoron." The scene of Joshua's victory. See above, iii. 16.

40. "Adasa." North of Bethhoron.

41. "O Lord." Not in Alex. MS. Compare iii. 18, 43.

43. "Adar." February and March; the month before Nisan, or Abib.

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² Or, the
Jews.

44 Now when Nicanor's host saw that he was slain, they cast away their weapons, and fled.

45 Then ²they pursued after them a day's journey, from Adasa unto Gazera, sounding an alarm after them with their trumpets.

46 Whereupon they came forth out of all the towns of Judea round about, and closed them in; so that they, turning back upon them that pursued them, were all slain with the sword, and not one of them was left.

47 Afterwards they took the spoils, and the prey, and smote off Nicanor's head, and his right hand, which he stretched out so proudly, and brought them away, and hanged them up toward Jerusalem.

48 For this cause the people rejoiced greatly, and they kept that day a day of great gladness.

^f 2 Macc. 15.
36.

49 Moreover ^fthey ordained to keep yearly this day, being the thirteenth of Adar.

^g ch. 9. 57.
& 14. 4.

50 Thus ^gthe land of Juda was in rest a little while.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 Judas is informed of the power and policy of the Romans, 20 and maketh a league with them. 24 The articles of that league.

NOW Judas had heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were mighty and valiant men, and such as would lovingly accept all that joined themselves unto them, and make a league of amity with all that came unto them;

2 and that they were men of great valour. It was told him also of their wars and noble acts which they had done among the ³Galatians, and how they had conquered them, and brought them under tribute;

³ Or,
Frenchmen.

45. "Gazera." See iv. 15.

47. "Smote off Nicanor's head." See below, 2 Macc. xv. 30. The Second Book of the Maccabees ends with the death of Nicanor.

CHAPTER VIII.

Judas makes a League with the Romans.

2. "Galatians." The Gallo-Grecians of Asia, allies of Antiochus the Great, subdued by Cneius Manlius Vulso, B.C. 189 (*Liv.* xxxviii. 12—26.). Others (as *Mommsen*) suppose that the inhabitants of Cisalpine Gaul are meant (see *Polyb.* ii. 14—34.), and this seems more probable.

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3 and what they had done in the country of Spain, for the winning of the mines of the silver and gold which is there;

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4 and that by their policy and patience they had conquered ²all the place, though it were very far ²Or, every place.

5 beside this, how they had discomfited in battle Philip, and Perseus, king of the ³Citims, with others that lifted up themselves against them, and had overcome them:

³ Or, Macedonians.

6 how also Antiochus the great king of Asia, that came against them in battle, having an hundred and twenty elephants, with horsemen, and chariots, and a very great army, was discomfited by them;

7 and how they took him alive, and covenanted that he and such as reigned after him should pay a great tribute, and give hostages, and that which was agreed upon,

8 and the country of India, and Media, and Lydia, and of the goodliest countries, which they took of him, and gave to king Eumenes:

9 moreover how the Grecians had determined to come and destroy them;

3. "The mines." On the mines of Spain, see *Plin.* iii. 4.

4. "All the place." The whole country.

5. "Philip, and Perseus." In the first and second Macedonic war. The first terminated by Quinctius Flaminius at Cynoscephalæ, B.C. 197; the second by Æmilius Paulus at Pydna, B.C. 168, which put an end to that kingdom.

5. "Citims." See i. 1.

6. "Discomfited." At the battle of Magnesia, B.C. 189. Compare *Liv.* xxxvii. 39.

7. "Took him alive." This is not confirmed by Roman historians. Compare *Liv.* xxxvii. 44. He fled to Sardis.

"That which was agreed upon." Or, "a partition" (of his kingdom).

8. "India." Perhaps an erroneous reading for "Ionia."

"Media." Perhaps a false reading for "Mysia." Compare *Liv.* xxxvii. 55, who says that the Romans gave to Eumenes those portions of the dominions of Antiochus which were on this side Mount Taurus, except Lycia and Caria.

"Eumenes." Son of Attalus, king of Pergamos.

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10 and that they, having knowledge thereof, sent against them a certain captain, and fighting with them slew many of them, and carried away captives their wives and their children, and spoiled them, and took possession of their lands, and pulled down their strong holds, and brought them to be their servants unto this day :

11 *it was told him* besides, how they destroyed and brought under their dominion all other kingdoms and isles that at any time resisted them ;

12 but with their friends and such as relied upon them they kept amity : and that they had conquered kingdoms both far and nigh, insomuch as all that heard of their name were afraid of them :

13 also that, whom they would help to a kingdom, those reign ; and whom again they would, they displace : finally, that they were greatly exalted :

14 yet for all this none of them wore a crown, or was clothed in purple, to be magnified thereby :

15 moreover how they had made for themselves a senate house, wherein three hundred and twenty men sat in council daily, consulting alway for the people, to the end they might be well ordered :

16 and that they committed their government to one man every year, who ruled over all their country, and that all were obedient to that one, and that there was neither envy nor emulation among them.

17 In consideration of these things, Judas chose Eupolemus the son of John, *the son* of Accos, and Jason the son of Eleazar, and sent them to Rome, to make a league of amity and confederacy with them,

18 *and to intreat them* that they would take the yoke from them ; for they saw that the kingdom of the Grecians did oppress Israel with servitude.

10. "Sent against them." Against the Achæan League, B.C. 147.
"A certain captain." Probably Mummius, the destroyer of Corinth, B.C. 146.

15. "Three hundred and twenty." Literally, 300 ; they were afterwards increased to 320, B.C. 123. Compare 5 Macc. xii., xiii.

16. "One man." Though there were two consuls, yet the Senate was generally represented by one in its dealings with foreign nations.

18. "Of the Grecians." Of Syria. See ver. 31. The greatness of

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19 They went therefore to Rome, which was a very great journey, and came into the senate, where they spake and said,

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20 Judas Maccabeus with his brethren, and the people of the Jews, have sent us unto you, to make a confederacy and peace with you, and that we might be registered your confederates and friends.

21 So that matter pleased the Romans well.

22 And this is the copy of the epistle which *the senate* wrote back again in tables of brass, and sent to Jerusalem, that there they might have by them a memorial of peace and confederacy :

23 Good success be to the Romans, and to the people of the Jews, by sea and by land for ever : the sword also and enemy be far from them.

24 If there come first any war upon the Romans or any of their confederates throughout all their dominion,

25 the people of the Jews shall help them, as the time shall be appointed, with all their heart :

26 neither shall they give any thing unto them that make war upon them, or aid them with victuals, weapons, money, or ships, as it hath seemed good unto the Romans ; but they shall keep their covenants without taking any thing therefore.

27 In the same manner also, if war come first upon the nation of the Jews, the Romans shall help them with all their heart, according as the time shall be appointed them :

28 neither shall victuals be given to them that take part against them, or weapons, or money, or ships, as it hath seemed good to the Romans ; but they shall keep their covenants, and that without deceit.

29 According to these articles did the Romans make a covenant with the people of the Jews.

30 Howbeit if hereafter the one party or the other shall think meet to add or diminish any thing, they may do it at their pleasures, and whatsoever they shall add or take away shall be ratified.

31 And as touching the evils that Demetrius

Rome was made by Almighty God to be helpful to the Jews in preserving them from being overwhelmed by Syria. See vv. 31, 32.

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doeth to the Jews, we have written unto him, saying, Wherefore hast thou made thy yoke heavy upon our friends and confederates the Jews?

32 If therefore they complain any more against thee, we will do them justice, and fight with thee by sea and by land.

CHAPTER IX.

1 Alcimus and Bacchides come again with new forces into Judea. 7 The army of Judas flee from him, 17 and he is slain. 30 Jonathan is in his place, 40 and revengeth his brother John's quarrel. 55 Alcimus is plagued, and dieth. 70 Bacchides maketh peace with Jonathan.

FURTHERMORE when Demetrius heard that Nicanor and his host were slain in battle, ² he sent Bacchides and Alcimus into the land of Judea the second time, and with them ³ the chief strength of his host :

² Gr. he added, or, proceeded to send.
³ Or, the right wing.

⁴ Or, Galilea. ⁴ Galgala, and pitched their tents before Masaloth, which is in Arbela, and after they had won it, they slew much people.

³ Also the first month of the hundred fifty and second year they encamped before Jerusalem :

⁵ Or, Berretho, Joseph.

⁴ from whence they removed, and went to ⁵ Berea, with twenty thousand footmen and two thousand horsemen.

⁵ Now Judas had pitched his tents at Eleasa, and three thousand chosen men with him :

⁶ who seeing the multitude of the other army to be so great were sore afraid ; whereupon many conveyed themselves out of the host, insomuch as there abode of them no more but eight hundred men.

⁷ When Judas therefore saw that his host slipt away, and that the battle pressed upon him, he was

CHAPTER IX.

Heroic Prowess and Death of Judas Maccabæus. Is Succeeded by his Brother, Jonathan. Miserable End of Alcimus, the Renegade High Priest.

2—4. "Galgala . . . Masaloth . . . Arbela . . . Berea." The sites of which are uncertain. Josephus places Arbela in Galilee ; but they seem to have been nearer to Jerusalem.

5. "Eleasa." Supposed by some to have been on the West or South-west of Jerusalem ; and this is confirmed by the mention of Azotus in ver. 15.

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sore troubled in mind, and much distressed, for that he had no time to gather them together.

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8 Nevertheless unto them that remained he said, Let us arise and go up against our enemies, if peradventure we may be able to fight with them.

9 But they dehorted him, saying, We shall never be able: ² let us now rather save our lives, and hereafter we will return with our brethren, and fight against them: for we are but few.

² We follow
here the
Roman
copy.

10 Then Judas said, God forbid that I should do this thing, and flee away from them: if our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and ³ let us not stain our honour.

³ Gr. let us
not leave
any just
cause behind
us, why our
glory should
be spoken
against.
⁴ Or, the
Jews.

11 With that the host of *Bacchides* removed out of their tents, and stood over against ⁴ them, their horsemen being divided into two troops, and their slingers and archers going before the host, and they that marched in the foreward were all mighty men.

12 As for Bacchides, he was in the right wing: so the host drew near on the two parts, and sounded their trumpets.

13 They also of Judas' side, even they sounded their trumpets also, so that the earth shook at the noise of the armies, and the battle continued from morning till night.

14 Now when Judas perceived that Bacchides and the strength of his army were on the right side, he took with him all the hardy men,

15 who discomfited the right wing, and pursued them unto the mount Azotus.

16 But when they of the left wing saw that they of the right wing were discomfited, they followed upon Judas and those that were with him hard at the heels from behind:

17 whereupon there was a sore battle, inasmuch as many were slain on both parts.

18 Judas also was killed, and the remnant fled.

19 Then Jonathan and Simon took Judas their brother, and buried him in the sepulchre of his fathers in Modin.

20 Moreover they bewailed him, and ^a all Israel ^a ch. 13. 26.

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made great lamentation for him, and mourned many days, saying,

21 How is the valiant man fallen, that delivered Israel!

22 As for the other things concerning Judas and his wars, and the noble acts which he did, and his greatness, they are not written: for they were very many.

23 ¶ Now after the death of Judas the wicked began to put forth their heads in all the coasts of Israel, and there arose up all such as wrought iniquity.

24 In those days also was there a very great famine, by reason whereof the country revolted, and went with ² them.

² *Bacchides
and his
company.*

25 Then Bacchides chose the wicked men, and made them lords of the country.

26 And they made enquiry and search for Judas' friends, and brought them unto Bacchides, who took vengeance of them, and ³ used them despitefully.

³ *Gr. mocked
them.*

27 So was there a great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time ^b that a prophet was not seen among them.

^b *ch. 4. 46.*

28 For this cause all Judas' friends came together, and said unto Jonathan,

29 Since thy brother Judas died, we have no man like him to go forth against our enemies, and Bacchides, and against them of our nation that are adversaries to us.

30 Now therefore we have chosen thee this day to be our prince and captain in his stead, that thou mayest fight our battles.

31 Upon this Jonathan took the governance upon him at that time, and rose up instead of his brother Judas.

32 But when Bacchides gat knowledge thereof, he sought for to slay him.

21. "How is the valiant man fallen!" An echo of David's words over Saul and Jonathan.

27. "A prophet." Such as Malachi, the last of the prophets (above, iv. 46.).

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33 Then Jonathan, and Simon his brother, and all that were with him, perceiving that, fled into the wilderness of Thecoe, and pitched their tents by the water of the pool Asphar.

34 ² Which when Bacchides understood, he came near to Jordan with all his host upon the sabbath day.

35 Now Jonathan had sent his brother ³ John, a captain of the people, to pray his friends the Nabathites, ⁴ that they might leave with them their carriage, which was much.

36 But the children of ⁵ Jambri came out of Medaba, and took John, and all that he had, and went their way with it.

37 After this came word to Jonathan and Simon his brother, that the children of Jambri made a great marriage, and were bringing the bride from ⁶ Nadabatha with a great train, as being the daughter of one of the great princes of Chanaan.

38 Therefore they remembered John their brother, and went up, and hid themselves under the covert of the mountain :

39 where they lifted up their eyes, and looked, and, behold, there was much ado and great carriage: and the bridegroom came forth, and his friends and brethren, to meet them with ⁷ drums, and ⁸ instruments of musick, and many weapons.

40 Then Jonathan and they that were with him rose up against them from the place where they lay in ambush, and made a slaughter of them in such sort, as many fell down dead, and the remnant fled into the mountain, and they took all their spoils.

41 Thus was the marriage turned into mourning, and the noise of their melody into lamentation.

42 So when they had avenged fully the blood of their brother, they turned again to the marsh of Jordan.

43 Now when Bacchides heard hereof, he came

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² Or, Which when Bacchides understood, on the sabbath day he came near.

³ Jo-eph. Antiq. lib. 13. cap. 1.

⁴ Gr. that he might leave with them their carriage, or, stuff.

⁵ Gr. Ambri.

⁶ Or, Medaba.

⁷ Or, timbrels.

⁸ Or, musicians.

33. "Thecoe." Tekoa, two hours' distance, S. of Bethlehem (2 Chr. xx. 20.).

35. "Nabathites;" v. 25.

36. "Medaba." On the E. of Jordan. See Num. xxi. 30. Josh. xiii. 9.

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on the sabbath day unto the banks of Jordan with a great power.

44 Then Jonathan said to his company, Let us go up now and fight for our lives, for it standeth not with us to day, as in time past :

45 for, behold, the battle is before us and behind us, and the water of Jordan on this side and that side, the marsh likewise and wood, neither is there place for us to turn aside.

46 Wherefore cry ye now unto heaven, that ye may be delivered from the hand of your enemies.

47 With that they joined battle, and Jonathan stretched forth his hand to smite Bacchides, but he turned back from him.

48 Then Jonathan and they that were with him leapt into Jordan, and swam over unto the farther bank : howbeit the other passed not over Jordan unto them.

49 So there were slain of Bacchides' side that day about ² a thousand men.

² *two thousand men,*
Joseph.
Antiq. lib.
13. cap. 1.
³ Or, *built.*

50 Afterward returned *Bacchides* to Jerusalem, and ³ repaired the strong cities in Judea ; the fort in Jericho, and Emmaus, and Bethhoron, and Bethel, and Thamnatha, Pharathoni, and ⁴ Taphon, *these did he strengthen* with high walls, with gates, and with bars.

⁴ Joseph.
Tecoā.

51 And in them he set a garrison, that they might work malice upon Israel.

⁵ Gr. *the city in Bethsura.*

52 He fortified also ⁵ the city Bethsura, and Gazara, and the tower, and put forces in them, and provision of victuals.

53 Besides, he took the chief men's sons in the country for hostages, and put them into the tower at Jerusalem to be kept.

cir. 160.

54 Moreover in the hundred fifty and third year, in the second month, Alcimus commanded that the wall of the inner court of the sanctuary should be

50. "Emmaus" (iii. 40.), "Bethhoron" (iii. 16.), . . . "Thamnatha," "Pharathoni." The sites are uncertain ; the former is probably one of the Timnaths of the Old Testament.

54. "The inner court." The court of the priests (1 Kin. vi. 36. 2 Chr. iv. 9.). Alcimus, by breaking down this wall, would have effaced the distinction between the priests and the people.

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pulled down; he pulled down also the works of the prophets.

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55 And as he began to pull down, even at that time was Alcimus plagued, and his enterprises hindered: for his mouth was stopped, and he was taken with a palsy, so that he could no more speak any thing, nor give order concerning his house.

56 So Alcimus died at that time with great torment.

57 Now when Bacchides saw that Alcimus was dead, he returned to the king: whereupon ^c the land of Judea was in rest two years. c ch. 7. 50.

58 Then all the ungodly men held a council, saying, Behold, Jonathan and his company are at ease, and dwell without care: now therefore we will bring Bacchides hither, who shall take them all in one night. cir. 158.

59 So they went and consulted with him.

60 Then removed he, and came with a great host, and sent letters privily to his adherents in Judea, that they should take Jonathan and those that were with him: howbeit they could not, because their counsel was known unto them.

61 Wherefore they took of the men of the country, that were authors of that mischief, about fifty persons, and slew them.

62 Afterward Jonathan, and Simon, and they that were with him, got them away to Bethbasi, which is in the wilderness, and they repaired the decays thereof, and made it strong.

63 Which thing when Bacchides knew, he gathered together all his host, and sent word ² to them that were of Judea.

² Or, to such of the country as were his friends to take his part.

64 Then went he and laid siege against Bethbasi; and they fought against it a long season, and made engines of war.

65 But Jonathan left his brother Simon in the

“The works of the prophets.” Works built under prophetic inspiration, especially of Haggai and Zechariah.

58. “The ungodly men held a council.” Thus, again, the Jews were injured from *within*, but God delivered them (vv. 72, 73.)

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² Or,
Odomarra.

city, and went forth himself into the country, and with a certain number went he forth.

66 And he smote ²Odonarkes and his brethren, and the children of Phasiron in their tent.

67 And when he began to smite them, and came up with his forces, Simon and his company went out of the city, and burned up the engines of war,

68 and fought against Bacchides, who was discomfited by them, and they afflicted him sore: for his counsel and travail was in vain.

69 Wherefore he was very wroth at the wicked men that gave him counsel to come into the country, insomuch as he slew many of them, and purposed to return into his own country.

70 Whereof when Jonathan had knowledge, he sent ambassadors unto him, to the end he should make peace with him, and deliver them the prisoners.

71 Which thing he accepted, and did according to his demands, and sware unto him that he would never do him harm all the days of his life.

72 When therefore he had restored unto him the prisoners that he had taken aforetime out of the land of Judea, he returned and went his way into his own land, neither ³came he any more into their borders.

73 Thus the sword ceased from Israel: but Jonathan dwelt at Machmas, and began to ⁴govern the people; and he destroyed the ungodly men out of Israel.

CHAPTER X.

¹ *Demetrius maketh large offers to have peace with Jonathan.* 25 *His letters to the Jews.* 47 *Jonathan maketh peace with Alexander,* 50 *who killeth Demetrius,* 58 *and marrieth the daughter of Ptolemeus.* 62 *Jonathan is sent for by him, and much honoured,* 75 *and prevailleth against the forces of Demetrius the younger,* 84 *and burneth the temple of Dagon.*

cir. 153.

⁵ Joseph.
the son of
Antiochus
Epiphanes.

IN the hundred and sixtieth year Alexander, ⁵the son of Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes, went up

73. "Machmas." About nine miles North of Jerusalem (1 Sam. xii. 2.).

CHAPTER X.

1. "Alexander." Balas, a pretended son of Antiochus Epiphanes.

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and took Ptolemais : for the people had received him, by means whereof he reigned there.

2 Now when king Demetrius heard thereof, he gathered together an exceeding great host, and went forth against him to fight.

3 Moreover Demetrius sent letters unto Jonathan with loving words, so as he magnified him.

4 For said he, Let us first make peace with him, before he join with Alexander against us :

5 else he will remember all the evils that we have done against him, and against his brethren and his people.

6 Wherefore he gave him authority to gather together an host, and to provide weapons, that he might aid him in battle : he commanded also that the hostages that were in the tower should be delivered him.

7 Then came Jonathan to Jerusalem, and read the letters in the audience of all the people, and of them that were in the tower :

8 who were sore afraid, when they heard that the king had given him authority to gather together an host.

9 Whereupon they of the tower delivered their hostages unto Jonathan, and he delivered them unto their parents.

10 This done, Jonathan settled himself in Jerusalem, and began to build and repair the city.

11 And he commanded the workmen to build the walls and the mount Sion round about with square stones for fortification ; and they did so.

12 Then the strangers, that were in the fortresses which Bacchides had built, fled away ;

13 insomuch as every man left his place, and went into his own country.

14 Only at Bethsura certain of those that had

set up by Attalus II., King of Pergamos, against Demetrius. He is called Theopator on his coins.

The rivalry of these two competitors, Alexander and Demetrius, was overruled for the good of the Jews. See what follows.

“Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes.” Rather, Alexander, surnamed Epiphanes (so styled on his coins), the son of Antiochus.

“Ptolemais.” See v. 15.

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forsaken the law and the commandments remained still : for it was their place of refuge.

15 Now when king Alexander had heard what promises Demetrius had sent unto Jonathan : when also it was told him of the battles and noble acts which he and his brethren had done, and of the pains that they had endured,

16 he said, Shall we find such another man ? now therefore we will make him our friend and confederate.

17 Upon this he wrote a letter, and sent it unto him, according to these words, saying,

18 King Alexander to his brother Jonathan sendeth greeting :

19 We have heard of thee, that thou art a man of great power, and meet to be our friend.

20 Wherefore now this day we ordain thee to be the high priest of thy nation, and to be called the king's friend ; (and therewithal he sent him a purple robe and a crown of gold :) and *require thee* to take our part, and keep friendship with us.

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21 So in the seventh month of the hundred and sixtieth year, at the feast of the tabernacles, Jonathan put on the holy robe, and gathered together forces, and provided much armour.

22 Whereof when Demetrius heard, he was very sorry, and said,

23 What have we done, that Alexander hath prevented us in making amity with the Jews to strengthen himself ?

24 I also will write unto them words of encouragement, and *promise them* dignities and gifts, that I may have their aid.

25 He sent unto them therefore to this effect : King Demetrius unto the people of the Jews sendeth greeting :

26 Whereas ye have kept covenants with us, and continued in our friendship, not joining yourselves

20. "Ordain thee to be the high priest." This office continued in his family till the days of Herod the Great.

24. "And promise them dignities." Rather, "of exaltation."

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with our enemies, we have heard hereof, and are glad.

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27 Wherefore now continue ye still to be faithful unto us, and we will well recompense you for the things ye do in our behalf.

28 And will grant you many immunities, and give you rewards.

29 And now do I free you, and for your sake I release all the Jews, from tributes, and from the customs of salt, and from crown taxes,

30 and from that which appertaineth unto me to receive for the third part of the seed, and the half of the fruit of the trees, I release it from this day forth, so that they shall not be taken of the land of Judea, nor of the three governments which are added thereunto out of the country of Samaria and Galilee, from this day forth for evermore.

31 Let Jerusalem also be holy and free, with the borders thereof, both from tenths and tributes.

32 And as for the tower which is at Jerusalem, I yield up my authority over it, and give it to the high priest, that he may set in it such men as he shall choose to keep it.

33 Moreover I freely set at liberty every one of the Jews, that were carried captives out of the land of Judea into any part of my kingdom, and *I will* that all my officers remit the tributes even of their cattle.

34 Furthermore *I will* that all the feasts, and sabbaths, and new moons, and solemn days, and the three days before the feast, and the three days

29. "Crown taxes." Literally, of crowns offered in tribute, and commuted into a money payment (xi. 35; xiii. 39.).

30. "Governments." Toparchies, or cantons.

"Galilee." Josephus adds, "and Peræa;" but it seems more probable that the words "and Galilee" are an interpolation. The writer is speaking of the three districts of Aphærema, Lydda, and Ramathem (see ver. 38, and xi. 34.), which were taken out of Samaria, and added to Judæa.

34. "The feasts, and sabbaths." There seems to have been a mysterious feeling of reverence for the religion of the Jews among the Syrian kings, after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. Compare vv. 39, 42; xi. 34.

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after the feast, shall be all days of immunity and freedom for all the Jews in my realm.

35 Also no man shall have authority to meddle *with them*, or to molest any of them in any matter.

36 *I will* further, that there be enrolled among the king's forces about thirty thousand men of the Jews, unto whom pay shall be given, as belongeth to all the king's forces.

37 And of them *some* shall be placed in the king's strong holds, of whom also *some* shall be set over the affairs of the kingdom, which are of trust : and *I will* that their overseers and governors be of themselves, and that they ²live after their own laws, even as the king hath commanded in the land of Judea.

² Gr. walk.

38 And concerning the three governments that are added to Judea from the country of Samaria, let them be joined with Judea, that they may be reckoned to be under one, nor bound to obey other authority than the high priest's.

³ Or, of the
holy things.

39 As for Ptolemais, and the land pertaining thereto, I give it as a free gift to the sanctuary at Jerusalem for the necessary expences ³of the sanctuary.

40 Moreover I give every year fifteen thousand shekels of silver out of the king's accounts from the places appertaining.

41 And all the overplus, which the officers payed not in as in former time, from henceforth shall be given toward the works of the temple.

42 And beside this, the five thousand shekels of silver, which they took from the uses of the temple out of the accounts year by year, even those things shall be released, because they appertain to the priests that minister.

43 And whosoever they be that flee unto the temple at Jerusalem, or be within the liberties thereof, being indebted unto the king, or for any other matter, let them be at liberty, and all that they have in my realm.

44 For the building also and repairing of the works of the sanctuary expences shall be given of the king's accounts.

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45 Yea, and for the building of the walls of Jerusalem, and the fortifying thereof round about, expences shall be given out of the king's accounts, as also for the building of the walls in Judea.

46 Now when Jonathan and the people heard these words, they gave no credit unto them, nor received them, because they remembered the great evil that he had done in Israel ; for he had afflicted them very sore.

47 But with Alexander they were well pleased, because he was the first that entreated of true peace with them, and they were confederate with him always.

48 Then gathered king Alexander great forces, and camped over against Demetrius. cir. 150.

49 And after the two kings had joined battle, Demetrius' host fled : but Alexander followed after him, and prevailed against them.

50 And he continued the battle very sore until the sun went down : and that day was Demetrius slain.

51 Afterward Alexander sent ambassadors to Ptolemee king of Egypt with a message to this effect :

52 Forasmuch as I am come again to my realm, and am set in the throne of my progenitors, and have gotten the dominion, and overthrown Demetrius, and recovered our country ;

53 for after I had joined battle with him, both he and his host was discomfited by us, so that we sit in the throne of his kingdom :

54 now therefore let us make a league of amity together, and give me now thy daughter to wife : and I will be thy son in law, and will give both thee and her gifts according to thy dignity.

55 Then Ptolemee the king gave answer, saying, Happy be the day wherein thou didst return into the land of thy fathers, and satest in the throne of their kingdom.

56 And now will I do to thee, as thou hast written : meet me therefore at Ptolemais, that we may

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see one another; for I will marry my daughter to thee according to thy desire.

57 So Ptolemee went out of Egypt with his daughter Cleopatra, and they came unto Ptolemais in the hundred threescore and second year:

58 where king Alexander meeting him, he gave unto him his daughter Cleopatra, and celebrated her marriage at Ptolemais with great glory, as the manner of kings is.

59 Now king Alexander had written unto Jonathan, that he should come and meet him.

60 Who thereupon went honourably to Ptolemais, where he met the two kings, and gave them and their friends silver and gold, and many presents, and found favour in their sight.

61 At that time certain pestilent fellows of Israel, men of a wicked life, assembled themselves against him, to accuse him: but the king would not hear them.

62 Yea more than that, the king commanded to take off his garments, and clothe him in purple: and they did so.

63 Also he made him sit by himself, and said unto his princes, Go with him into the midst of the city, and make proclamation, that no man complain against him of any matter, and that no man trouble him for any manner of cause.

64 Now when his accusers saw that he was honoured according to the proclamation, and clothed in purple, they fled all away.

65 So the king honoured him, and wrote him among his chief friends, and made him a duke,
² Or, governor of a province. and ² partaker of his dominion.

66 Afterward Jonathan returned to Jerusalem with peace and gladness.

cir. 148. 67 Furthermore in the hundred threescore and fifth year came Demetrius son of Demetrius out of Crete into the land of his fathers:

58. "He gave him his daughter." But there was no love in the contract.

65. "Duke." A general.

"Partaker of his dominion." Rather, governor of a district.

67. "Demetrius." The second (Nicator), son of Demetrius Soter, who had been overcome by Alexander Balas; slain (ver. 50.).

L. MACCABEES, X.

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cir. 148.

68 whereof when king Alexander heard tell, he was right sorry, and returned into Antioch.

69 Then Demetrius made Apollonius the governor of Celosyria his general, who gathered together a great host, and camped in Jamnia, and sent unto Jonathan the high priest, saying,

70 Thou alone liftest up thyself against us, and I am laughed to scorn for thy sake, and reproached: and why dost thou vaunt thy power against us in the mountains?

71 Now therefore, if thou trustest in thine own strength, come down to us into the plain field, and there let us try the matter together: for with me is the power of the cities.

72 Ask and learn who I am, and the rest that take our part, and they shall tell thee that thy foot is not able to stand before our face; for thy fathers have been twice put to flight in their own land.

73 Wherefore now thou shalt not be able to abide the horsemen and so great a power in the plain, where is neither stone nor flint, nor place to flee unto.

74 So when Jonathan heard these words of Apollonius, he was moved in his mind, and choosing ten thousand men he went out of Jerusalem, where Simon his brother met him for to help him.

75 And he pitched his tents against Joppe: but they of Joppe shut him out of the city, because Apollonius had a garrison there.

76 Then Jonathan laid siege unto it: whereupon they of the city let him in for fear: and so Jonathan won Joppe.

77 Whereof when Apollonius heard, he took three

69. "Apollonius." Probably the person of that name who had been brought up with Demetrius I. at Rome (*Polyb.* xxxi. 19.).

"Celosyria." Phoenicia and Palestine.

"Jamnia." Near Joppa (iv. 15.).

72. "Twice." See v. 60; vi. 47; ix. 6, 18. Some suppose a reference to earlier victories gained over Israel in Philistia.

73. "Stone nor flint." To impede the charge of our cavalry; but all is open plain.

75. "Joppe." See Josh. xix. 46.

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cir. 148.

²Or, *as though*
he would pass
through it.

³Or, *led his*
company.

thousand horsemen, with a great host *of footmen*, and went to Azotus ²as one that journeyed, and therewithal ³drew him forth into the plain, because he had a great number of horsemen, in whom he put his trust.

78 Then *Jonathan* followed after him to Azotus, where the armies joined battle.

79 Now Apollonius had left a thousand horsemen in ambush.

80 And Jonathan knew that there was an ambushment behind him; for they had compassed in his host, and cast darts at the people, from morning till evening.

81 But the people stood still, as Jonathan had commanded them: and so the ⁴enemies' horses were tired.

82 Then brought Simon forth his host, and set them against the footmen, (for the horsemen were spent,) who were discomfited by him, and fled.

83 The horsemen also, being scattered in the field, fled to Azotus, and went into Beth-dagon, their idol's temple, for safety.

84 But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire.

85 Thus there were burned and slain with the sword well nigh eight thousand men.

86 And from thence Jonathan removed his host, and camped against Ascalon, where the men of the city came forth, and met him with great pomp.

87 After this returned Jonathan and his host unto Jerusalem, having many spoils.

88 Now when king Alexander heard these things, he honoured Jonathan yet more,

89 and sent him a buckle of gold, as the use is to be given to such as are of the king's blood: he gave him also Accaron with the borders thereof in possession.

84. "Dagon." See 1 Sam. v. 2.

89. "Accaron." Ekron.

I. MACCABEES, XI.

CHAPTER XI.

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CHRIST
cir. 146.

12 *Ptolemy taketh away his daughter from Alexander, and entereth upon his kingdom. 17 Alexander is slain, and Ptolemy dieth within three days. 20 Jonathan besiegeth the tower at Jerusalem. 26 The Jews and he are much honoured by Demetrius, 48 who is rescued by the Jews from his own subjects in Antioch. 57 Antiochus the younger honoureth Jonathan. 61 His exploits in divers places.*

AND the king of Egypt gathered together a great host, like the sand that lieth upon the sea shore, and many ships, and went about through deceit to get Alexander's kingdom, and join it to his own.

2 Whereupon he took his journey into Syria in peaceable manner, so as they of the cities opened unto him, and met him: for king Alexander had commanded them so to do, because he was his father in law.

3 Now as Ptolemee entered into the cities, he set in every one of them a garrison of soldiers to keep it.

4 And when he came near to Azotus, they shewed him the temple of Dagon that was burnt, and Azotus and the suburbs thereof that were destroyed, and the bodies that were cast abroad, and them that he had burnt in the battle; for they had made heaps of them by the way where he should pass.

5 Also they told the king whatsoever Jonathan had done, to the intent he might blame him: but the king held his peace.

6 Then Jonathan met the king with great pomp at Joppe, where they saluted one another, and ² lodged. 2 Gr. slept.

7 Afterward Jonathan, when he had gone with the king to the river called Eleutherus, returned again to Jerusalem.

8 King Ptolemee therefore, having gotten the dominion of the cities by the sea unto Seleucia upon the sea coast, imagined wicked counsels against Alexander.

9 Whereupon he sent ambassadors unto king

CHAPTER XI.

1. "The king of Egypt." Ptolemy Philometor.

7. "Eleutherus." The boundary between Syria and Phœnicia; it rises in Lebanon and flows into the Mediterranean between Tripolis and Arcades.

8. "Seleucia." Five miles North of the mouth of the Orentes, and fifteen miles from Antioch.

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Demetrius, saying, Come, let us make a league betwixt us, and I will give thee my daughter whom Alexander hath, and thou shalt reign in thy father's kingdom :

10 for I repent that I gave my daughter unto him, for he sought to slay me.

11 Thus did he slander him, because he was desirous of his kingdom.

12 Wherefore he took his daughter from him, and gave her to Demetrius, and forsook Alexander, so that their hatred was openly known.

13 Then Ptolemee entered into Antioch, where he set two crowns upon his head, the crown of Asia, and of Egypt.

14 In the mean season was king Alexander in Cilicia, because those that dwelt in those parts had revolted from him.

15 But when Alexander heard of this, he came to war against him: whereupon *king* Ptolemee brought forth *his host*, and met him with a mighty power, and put him to flight.

16 So Alexander fled into Arabia, there to be defended; but king Ptolemee was exalted:

17 for Zabdiel the Arabian took off Alexander's head, and sent it unto Ptolemee.

cir. 145.

² Gr. and those that were in the holds were slain of those that were in the holds.

18 King Ptolemee also died the third day after, ²and they that were in the strong holds were slain one of another.

19 By this means Demetrius reigned in the hundred threescore and seventh year.

20 At the same time Jonathan gathered together them that were in Judea, to take the tower that

12. "His daughter." Cleopatra (x. 57.).

17. "Zabdiel." An Arab chieftain, to whom Alexander had fled for protection. An Arab chief of that name had befriended Antiochus the Great against Ptolemy Philopator; but he slew his guest and suppliant Alexander, and sent his head to Ptolemy, Alexander's father-in-law.

18. "Died." Of the wounds received in the battle against his son-in-law. See ver. 15. He had been senseless, and exulted at the sight of his son-in-law's head, and expired: and so both Alexander and Ptolemy came to a miserable end.

The writer appears to dwell on the history of these and other treacherous and cruel kings by way of contrast with the Maccabees, who fought for God and died gloriously.

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was in Jerusalem: and he made many engines of war against it.

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cir. 145.

21 Then certain ungodly persons, who hated their own people, went unto the king, and told him that Jonathan besieged the tower.

22 Whereof when he heard, he was angry, and immediately removing, he came to Ptolemais, and wrote unto Jonathan, that he should not lay siege to the tower, but come and speak with him at Ptolemais in great haste.

23 Nevertheless Jonathan, when he heard this, commanded to besiege it *still*: and he chose certain of the elders of Israel and the priests, and put himself in peril;

24 and took silver and gold, and raiment, and divers presents besides, and went to Ptolemais unto the king, where he found favour in his sight.

25 And ^a though certain ungodly men of the people had made complaints against him, ^a ch. 10. 61, &c.

26 yet the king entreated him as his predecessors had done before, and promoted him in the sight of all his friends,

27 and ^b confirmed him in the high priesthood, and in all the honours that he had before, and gave him preeminence among his chief friends. ^b ch. 10. 20. & 14. 38. ver. 57.

28 Then Jonathan desired the king, that he would make Judea free from tribute, as also the three governments, with the country of Samaria; and he promised him three hundred talents.

29 So the king consented, and wrote letters unto Jonathan of all these things after this manner:

30 King Demetrius unto his brother Jonathan, and unto the nation of the Jews, sendeth greeting:

31 We send you here a copy of the letter which we did write unto our cousin Lasthenes concerning you, that ye might see it.

32 King Demetrius unto his father Lasthenes sendeth greeting:

33 We are determined to do good to the people

28. "The three governments;" or, toparchies. See on x. 30.

32. "Lasthenes." The general of the Cretans (x. 67.).

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cir. 145.

² Joseph.
Antiq. lib.
13. cap. 8.

6 ch. 10. 42.

d ch. 10. 29.

of the Jews, who are our friends, and keep covenants with us, because of their good will toward us.

34 ² Wherefore we have ratified unto them the borders of Judea, with the three governments of Apherema and Lydda and Ramathem, that are added unto Judea from the country of Samaria, and ^c all things appertaining unto them, for all such as do sacrifice in Jerusalem, instead of the payments which the king received of them yearly aforetime out of the fruits of the earth and of trees.

35 And as for other things that belong unto us, of the tithes and customs pertaining unto us, as also ^d the saltpits, and the crown taxes, which are due unto us, we discharge them of them all for their relief.

36 And nothing hereof shall be revoked from this time forth for ever.

37 Now therefore see that thou make a copy of these things, and let it be delivered unto Jonathan, and set upon the holy mount in a conspicuous place.

38 After this, when king Demetrius saw that the land was quiet before him, and that no resistance was made against him, he sent away all his forces, every one to his own place, except certain bands of strangers, whom he had gathered from the isles of the heathen: wherefore all the forces of his fathers hated him.

39 Moreover there was one Tryphon, that had been of Alexander's part afore, who, seeing that

34. "Apherema." Perhaps Ephraim, near Bethel (Josh. xviii. 23. St. John xi. 54.).

"Lydda." Between Jaffa and Jerusalem (1 Chr. xiii. 12.). Its later name was Diospolis.

"Ramathem." Ramathaim (1 Sam. i. 1.). The Arimathæa of the Gospels (St. Matt. xxvii. 15.).

35. "Crown taxes;" x. 29.

"Saltpits." On the Dead Sea.

"For their relief." Or, freely.

38. "Of his fathers." Seleucus Philopator, and Demetrius I., and other Syrian kings.

39. "Tryphon." Deodotus of Apamæa in Syria; he afterwards betrayed Antiochus (xii. 39; xiii. 31.).

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all the host murmured against Demetrius, went to Simalcue the Arabian, that brought up Antiochus the young son of Alexander,

40 and lay sore upon him to deliver him *this young Antiochus*, that he might reign in his father's stead: he told him therefore all that Demetrius had done, and how his men of war were at enmity with him, and there he remained a long season.

41 In the mean time Jonathan sent unto king Demetrius, that he would cast those of the tower out of Jerusalem, and those also in the fortresses: for they fought against Israel.

42 So Demetrius sent unto Jonathan, saying, I will not only do this for thee and thy people, but I will greatly honour thee and thy nation, if opportunity serve.

43 Now therefore thou shalt do well, if thou send me men to help me; for all my forces are gone from me.

44 Upon this Jonathan sent him three thousand strong men unto Antioch: and when they came to the king, the king was very glad of their coming.

45 Howbeit they that were of the city gathered themselves together into the midst of the city, to the number of an hundred and twenty thousand men, and would have slain the king.

46 Wherefore the king fled into the court, but they of the city kept the passages of the city, and began to fight.

47 Then the king called to the Jews for help, who came unto him all at once, and dispersing themselves through the city slew that day in the city to the number of an hundred thousand.

48 Also they set fire on the city, and gat many spoils that day, and delivered the king.

49 So when they of the city saw that the Jews had got the city as they would, their courage was abated: wherefore they made supplication to the king, and cried, saying,

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cir. 145.

² Or, *Be
friends
with us*

50 ² Grant us peace, and let the Jews cease from assaulting us and the city.

51 With that they cast away their weapons, and made peace; and the Jews were honoured in the sight of the king, and in the sight of all that were in his realm; and they returned to Jerusalem, having great spoils.

52 So king Demetrius sat on the throne of his kingdom, and the land was quiet before him.

53 Nevertheless he dissembled in all that ever he spake, and estranged himself from Jonathan, neither rewarded he him according to the benefits which he had received of him, but troubled him very sore.

cir. 144.

54 After this returned Tryphon, and with him the young child Antiochus, who reigned, and was crowned.

55 Then there gathered unto him all the men of war, whom Demetrius had put away, and they fought against Demetrius, who turned his back and fled.

³ Gr. *beasts*.

56 Moreover Tryphon took the ³ elephants, and won Antioch.

57 At that time young Antiochus wrote unto Jonathan, saying, I confirm thee in the high priesthood, and appoint thee ruler over the four governments, and to be one of the king's friends.

⁴ Gr. *and
service*.

58 Upon this he sent him golden vessels ⁴ to be served in, and gave him leave to drink in gold, and to be clothed in purple, and to wear a golden buckle.

⁵ Or, *went
beyond the
river, and
passed
through the
cities, or,
went and
passed be-
yond the
river and
through the
cities, Gr.*

59 His brother Simon also he made captain from the place called The ladder of Tyrus unto the borders of Egypt.

60 Then Jonathan ⁵ went forth, and passed through the cities beyond the water, and all the forces of Syria gathered themselves unto him for

57. "The four governments." On three of them, see ver. 28, and ver. 34. The fourth is uncertain; it may have been Accaron, or Ekron.

58. "To be served in." Or, and a (dinner) service.

59. "The ladder." A high hill, about twenty miles North of Ptolemais, the modern Ras-en-Nakura.

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to help him: and when he came to Ascalon, they of the city met him honourably.

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CHRIST
cir. 144.

61 From whence he went to Gaza, but they of Gaza shut him out; wherefore he laid siege unto it, and burned ²the suburbs thereof with fire, and spoiled them.

² Or,
the places
thereabout.

62 Afterward, when they of Gaza made supplication unto Jonathan, ³he made peace with them, and took the sons of their chief men for hostages, and sent them to Jerusalem, and passed through the country unto Damascus.

³ Gr. he gave
them the
right hand.

63 Now when Jonathan heard that Demetrius' princes were come to Cades, which is in Galilee, with a great power, purposing ⁴to remove him out of the country,

⁴ Or,
to remove
him from
the affairs
of the
kingdom.

64 he went to meet them, and left Simon his brother in the country.

65 Then Simon encamped against Bethsura, and fought against it a long season, and shut it up:

66 but they desired to have peace with him, which he granted them, and then put them out from thence, and took the city, and set a garrison in it.

67 As for Jonathan and his host, they pitched at the water of Gennesar, from whence betimes in the morning they gat them to the plain of Nasor.

68 And, behold, the host of strangers met them in the plain, who, having laid men in ambush for him in the mountains, came themselves over against him.

69 So when they that lay in ambush rose out of their places, and joined battle, all that were of Jonathan's side fled;

70 insomuch as there was not one of them left, except Mattathias the son of Absalom, and Judas the son of Calphi, the captains of the host.

63. "Cades." In Naphtali (Josh xii. 22.).

"Country." Or "office," according to some MSS.

65. "Bethsura;" iv. 29.

67. "Gennesar." Gennesaret.

"Nasor." Rather, with some MSS., Æsor, or Hazor (Josh. xi. 1.).

I. MACCABEES, XII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 144.

71 Then Jonathan rent his clothes, and cast earth upon his head, and prayed.

72 Afterwards turning again to battle, he put them to flight, and so they ran away.

73 Now when his own men that were fled saw this, they turned again unto him, and with him pursued them to Cades, even unto their own tents, and there they camped.

74 So there were slain of the heathen that day about three thousand men : but Jonathan returned to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XII.

¹ *Jonathan reneweth his league with the Romans and Lacedemonians.*
²⁸ *The forces of Demetrius, thinking to surprise Jonathan, flee away for fear.* ³⁵ *Jonathan fortifieth the castles in Judea, 48 and is shut up by the fraud of Tryphon in Ptolemais.*

NOW when Jonathan saw that the time served him, he chose certain men, and sent them to Rome, ^a for to confirm and renew the friendship that they had with them.

^a ch. 8. 1, 20.

2 He sent letters also to the Lacedemonians, and to other places, for the same purpose.

3 So they went unto Rome, and entered into the senate, and said, Jonathan the high priest, and the people of the Jews, sent us unto you, to the end ye should renew the friendship, which ye had with them, and league, as in former time.

4 Upon this *the Romans* gave them letters unto the governors of every place, that they should bring them into the land of Judea peaceably.

5 And this is the copy of the letters which Jonathan wrote to the Lacedemonians :

6 Jonathan the high priest, and the elders of the nation, and the priests, and the other people of the Jews, unto the Lacedemonians their brethren send greeting :

CHAPTER XII.

Jonathan's Exploits and Death.

2. "The Lacedemonians." Rather, as in the Greek, the Spartans : the dominant race in Laconia.

I. MACCABEES, XII.

7 There were letters sent in times past unto Onias the high priest from ² Darius, who reigned then among you, to signify that ye are our brethren, as the copy here underwritten doth specify.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 144.

² Areus:
See Joseph.
Antiq. lib.
13. cap. 8.

8 At which time Onias entreated the ambassador that was sent honourably, and received the letters, wherein declaration was made of the ³ league and friendship.

³ Or,
kindred,
Jos. Antiq.

9 Therefore we also, albeit we need none of these things, for that we have the holy books of scripture in our hands to comfort us,

10 have nevertheless attempted to send unto you for the renewing of brotherhood and friendship, lest we should become strangers unto you altogether: for there is a long time passed since ye sent unto us.

11 We therefore at all times without ceasing, both in our feasts, and other convenient days, do remember you in the sacrifices which we offer, and in our prayers, as reason is, and as it becometh us to think upon our brethren:

12 and we are right glad of your honour.

13 As for ourselves, we have had great troubles and wars on every side, forsomuch as the kings that are round about us have fought against us.

14 Howbeit we would not be troublesome unto you, nor to others of our confederates and friends, in these wars:

15 for we have help from heaven that succoureth us, so as we are delivered from our enemies, and our enemies are brought under foot.

16 For this cause we chose Numenius *the son* of Antiochus, and Antipater *the son* of Jason, and sent them unto the Romans, to renew the amity that we had with them, and the former league.

7. "There were letters sent in times past unto Onias the high priest from Darius." Rather, Arias, or Areus, probably the first Spartan king of that name (B.C. 309—265.), to Onias the First (B.C. 323—300.).

9. "We have the holy books of Scripture in our hands to comfort us." A memorable declaration. Compare ver. 15, "we have help from heaven that succoureth us;" and see xiv. 14. The strength of the Maccabees was in the Word of God, and in prayer.

I. MACCABEES, XII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 144.

17 We commanded them also to go unto you, and to salute you, and to deliver you our letters concerning the renewing of our brotherhood.

18 Wherefore now ye shall do well to give us an answer thereto.

² Read out
of Joseph.
which
Areus sent
to Onias.

19 And this is the copy of the letters ² which Oniars sent.

20 Areus king of the Lacedemonians to Onias the high priest, greeting :

21 It is found in writing, that the Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham :

³ Gr. *peace*.

22 now therefore, since this is come to our knowledge, ye shall do well to write unto us of your ³ prosperity.

23 We do write back again to you, that your cattle and goods are our's, and our's are your's. We do command therefore *our ambassadors* to make report unto you on this wise.

24 Now when Jonathan heard that Demetrius' princes were come to fight against him with a greater host than afore,

⁴ Or, to set
foot in his
country :
or, to in-
vade his
country.

25 he removed from Jerusalem, and met them in the land of Amathis: for he gave them no respite ⁴ to enter his country.

26 He sent spies also unto their tents, who came again, and told him that they were appointed to come upon them in the night season.

27 Wherefore so soon as the sun was down, Jonathan commanded his men to watch, and to be in arms, that all the night long they might be ready to fight: also he sent forth centinels round about the host.

28 But when the adversaries heard that Jonathan and his men were ready for battle, they feared, and

19. "Which Oniars sent." Rather, which Areus (or Arias) sent to Onias.

21. "The Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham." Probably because the Spartans, being Dorians, were Pelasgi, who are said to have been derived from Peleg, the son of Eber, the ancestor of Abraham (Gen. x. 25; xi. 16—26.).

25. "Amathis." Hamath, on the Orontes, at the Northern foot of Lebanon (Num. xxiii. 21; xxxiv. 8.).

I. MACCABEES, XII.

trembled in their hearts, and ²they kindled fires in their camp.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 144.

29 Howbeit Jonathan and his company knew it not till the morning: for they saw the lights burning.

² Joseph.
Antiq. lib.
13. cap. 9.
*they went
away.*

30 Then Jonathan pursued after them, but overtook them not: for they were gone over the river Eleutherus.

31 Wherefore Jonathan turned to the Arabians, who were called ³Zabadeans, and smote them, and took their spoils.

³ Joseph.
Gr. Naba-
theans, or,
Zabatheans.

32 And removing thence, he came to Damascus, and so passed through all the country.

33 Simon also went forth, and passed through the country unto Ascalon, and the holds there adjoining, from whence he turned aside to Joppe, and won it.

34 For he had heard that they would deliver the hold unto them that took Demetrius' part; wherefore he set a garrison there to keep it.

35 After this came Jonathan home again, and calling the elders of the people together, he consulted with them about building strong holds in Judea,

36 and making the walls of Jerusalem higher, and raising a great mount between the tower and the city, for to separate it from the city, that so it might be alone, that men might neither sell nor buy in it.

37 Upon this they came together to build up the city, ⁴forasmuch as *part* of the wall toward the brook on the east side was fallen down, and they repaired that which was called Caphenatha.

⁴ Or, Ac-
cording to
the Roman
reading,
and he
came near
to the wall
of the brook
toward
the east.

38 Simon also set up Adida in Sephela, and made it strong with gates and bars.

28. "They kindled fires." To make a feint of being still there; but they fled.

31. "Zabadeans." Probably on N.W. of Damascus.

37. "Forasmuch," &c. Rather, "and a part of the wall fell down, toward the brook Kedron on the East."

"Caphenatha." A part of the wall.

38. "Adida in Sephela." Namely, Adida (E. of Lydda), in the low land. See Ezra ii. 23. Neh. xi. 34.

I. MACCABEES, XII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 144.

39 Now Tryphon went about to get the kingdom of Asia, and to kill Antiochus the king, that he might set the crown upon his own head.

40 Howbeit he was afraid that Jonathan would not suffer him, and that he would fight against him; wherefore he sought a way how to take Jonathan, that he might kill him. So he removed, and came to Bethsan.

41 Then Jonathan went out to meet him with forty thousand men chosen for the battle, and came to Bethsan.

42 Now when Tryphon saw that Jonathan came with so great a force, he durst not stretch his hand against him;

43 but received him honourably, and commended him unto all his friends, and gave him gifts, and commanded his men of war to be as obedient unto him, as to himself.

44 Unto Jonathan also he said, Why hast thou put all this people to so great trouble, seeing there is no war betwixt us?

45 Therefore send them now home again, and choose a few men to wait on thee, and come thou with me to Ptolemais, for I will give it thee, and the rest of the strong holds and forces, and all that have any charge: as for me, I will return and depart: for this is the cause of my coming.

46 So Jonathan believing him did as he bade him, and sent away his host, who went into the land of Judea.

47 And with himself he retained but three thousand men, of whom he ²sent two thousand into Galilee, and one thousand went with him.

48 Now as soon as Jonathan entered into Ptolemais, they of Ptolemais shut the gates, and took him, and all them that came with him they slew with the sword.

49 Then sent Tryphon an host of footmen and

² Gr.
left two
thousand
in Galilee.

39, 40. "Went about . . . to kill Antiochus . . sought a way how "to take Jonathan." He succeeded in his treachery against Jonathan (ver. 52.) and the king (xiii. 31.), but came to an unhappy end.

41. "Bethsan." Scythopolis.

I. MACCABEES, XIII.

horsemen into Galilee, and into the great plain, to destroy all Jonathan's company.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 144.

50 But when they knew that Jonathan and they that were with him were taken and slain, they encouraged one another, and went close together, prepared to fight.

51 They therefore that followed upon them, perceiving that they were ready to fight for their lives, turned back again.

52 Whereupon they all came into the land of Judea peaceably, and there they bewailed Jonathan, and them that were with him, and they were sore afraid; wherefore all Israel made great lamentation.

53 Then all the heathen that were round about them sought to destroy them: for said they, They have no captain, nor any to help them: now therefore let us make war upon them, and take away their memorial from among men.

CHAPTER XIII.

8 Simon is made captain in his brother Jonathan's room. 19 Tryphon getteth two of Jonathan's sons into his hands, and slayeth their father. 27 The tomb of Jonathan. 36 Simon is favoured by Demetrius, 40 and winneth Gaza, and the tower at Jerusalem.

NOW when Simon heard that Tryphon had gathered together a great host to invade the land of Judea, and destroy it,

2 and saw that the people was in great trembling and fear, he went up to Jerusalem, and gathered the people together,

3 and gave them exhortation, saying, Ye yourselves know what great things I, and my brethren, and my father's house, have done for the laws and the sanctuary, the battles also and troubles which we have seen,

4 by reason whereof all my brethren are slain for Israel's sake, and I am left alone.

CHAPTER XIII.

Simon made Captain. Jonathan's Death.

1. "Simon." The second son of Mattathias the Priest, and elder brother of Judas Maccabæus and Jonathan.

I. MACCABEES, XIII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 144.

5 Now therefore be it far from me, that I should spare mine own life in any time of trouble: for I am no better than my brethren.

6 Doubtless I will avenge my nation, and the sanctuary, and our wives, and our children: for all the heathen are gathered to destroy us of very malice.

7 Now as soon as the people heard these words, their spirit revived.

8 And they answered with a loud voice, saying, Thou shalt be our leader instead of Judas and Jonathan thy brother.

9 Fight thou our battles, and whatsoever thou commandest us, that will we do.

* See chap.
12. 36.

10 So then he gathered together all the men of war, and made haste ^a to finish the walls of Jerusalem, and he fortified it round about.

11 Also he sent Jonathan the son of Absalom, and with him a great power, to Joppe: who casting out them that were therein remained there in it.

12 So Tryphon removed from Ptolemais with a great power to invade the land of Judea, and Jonathan was with him in ward.

13 But Simon pitched his tents at Adida, over against the plain.

14 Now when Tryphon knew that Simon was risen up instead of his brother Jonathan, and meant to join battle with him, he sent messengers unto him, saying,

² Or, for the
affairs, or,
offices, that
he had, or,
the neces-
sary uses
which he
had.

15 Whereas we have Jonathan thy brother in hold, it is for money that he is owing unto the king's treasure, ² concerning the business that was committed unto him.

16 Wherefore now send an hundred talents of silver, and two of his sons for hostages, that when he is at liberty he may not revolt from us, and we will let him go.

17 Hereupon Simon, albeit he perceived that they spake deceitfully unto him, yet sent he the money and the children, lest peradventure he should procure to himself great hatred of the people:

I. MACCABEES, XIII.

18 who might have said, Because I sent him not the money and the children, therefore is *Jonathan* dead.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 144.

19 So he sent them the children and the hundred talents: howbeit *Tryphon* dissembled, neither would he let *Jonathan* go.

20 And after this came *Tryphon* to invade the land, and destroy it, going round about by the way that leadeth unto *Adora*: but *Simon* and his host marched against him in every place, wheresoever he went.

21 Now they that were in the tower sent messengers unto *Tryphon*, to the end that he should hasten his coming unto them by the wilderness, and send them victuals.

22 Wherefore *Tryphon* made ready all his horsemen to come that night: but there fell a very great snow, by reason whereof he came not. So he departed, and came into the country of *Galaad*.

23 And when he came near to *Bascama*, he slew *Jonathan*, who was buried there.

24 Afterward *Tryphon* returned and went into his own land.

25 Then sent *Simon*, and took the bones of *Jonathan* his brother, and buried them in *Modin*, the city of his fathers. cir. 143.

26 And ^ball Israel made great lamentation for him, and bewailed him many days. b ch. 9. 20.

27 *Simon* also built a monument upon the sepulchre of his father and his brethren, and raised it aloft to the sight, with hewn stone behind and before.

28 Moreover he set up seven pyramids, one against another, for his father, and his mother, and his four brethren.

29 And in these he made cunning devices, about the which he set great pillars, and upon the pillars he made all their armour for a perpetual memory, and by the armour ships carved, that they might be seen of all that sail on the sea.

22. "Galaad." Gilead; East of Jordan, where *Bascama* was situated.

25. "Modin." See ii. 1.

I. MACCABEES, XIII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 143.

30 This is the sepulchre which he made at Modin, and it standeth yet unto this day.

31 Now Tryphon dealt deceitfully with the young king Antiochus, and slew him.

32 And he reigned in his stead, and crowned himself king of Asia, and brought a great calamity upon the land.

² Gr. in the
strong holds.

33 Then Simon built up the strong holds in Judea, and fenced them about with high towers, and great walls, and gates, and bars, and laid up victuals ² therein.

³ Gr. all
Tryphon's
doings were
robberies.

34 Moreover Simon chose men, and sent to king Demetrius, to the end he should give the land an immunity, because ³ all that Tryphon did was to spoil.

35 Unto whom king Demetrius answered and wrote after this manner :

36 King Demetrius unto Simon the high priest, and friend of kings, as also unto the elders and nation of the Jews, sendeth greeting :

37 The golden crown, and the scarlet robe, which ye sent unto us, we have received : and we are ready to make a stedfast peace with you, yea, and to write unto our officers, to confirm the immunities which we have granted.

38 And whatsoever covenants we have made with you shall stand ; and the strong holds, which ye have builded, shall be your own.

39 As for any oversight or fault committed unto this day, we forgive it, and the crown tax also, which ye owe us : and if there were any other tribute paid in Jerusalem, it shall no more be paid.

40 And look who are meet among you to be in our court, let them be enrolled, and let there be peace betwixt us.

41 Thus the yoke of the heathen was taken away from Israel in the hundred and seventieth year.

^e ch. 14. 27.

42 Then the people of Israel began ^e to write in their instruments and contracts, In the first year of

37. "The scarlet robe." Rather, the robe embroidered with palm branches.

I. MACCABEES, XIII.

Simon the high priest, the governor and leader of the Jews.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 143.

43 In those days Simon camped against Gaza, and besieged it round about; he made also an engine of war, and set it by the city, and battered a certain tower, and took it.

44 And they that were in the engine leaped into the city; whereupon there was a great uproar in the city:

45 insomuch as the people of the city rent their clothes, and climbed upon the walls with their wives and children, and cried with a loud voice, beseeching Simon ²to grant them peace.

² Gr. to give
them his
right hand.

46 And they said, Deal not with us according to our wickedness, but according to thy mercy.

47 So Simon was appeased toward them, and fought no more against them, but put them out of the city, and cleansed the houses wherein the idols were, and so entered into it with songs and thanksgiving.

48 Yea, he put all uncleanness out of it, and placed such men there as would keep the law, and made it stronger than it was before, and built therein a dwellingplace for himself.

49 They also of the tower in Jerusalem were kept so strait, that they could neither come forth, nor go into the country, nor buy, nor sell: wherefore they were in great distress for want of victuals, and a great number of them perished through famine.

cir. 142.

50 Then cried they to Simon, beseeching him ³to be at one with them: which thing he granted them; and when he had put them out from thence, he cleansed the tower from pollutions:

³ Or, to make
peace with
them.

51 and entered into it the three and twentieth day of the second month, in the hundred seventy and first year, with thanksgiving, and branches of palm trees, and with harps, and cymbals, and with viols, and hymns, and songs: because there was destroyed a great enemy out of Israel.

43. "Gaza." Rather, Gazara (xiv. 7, 34.).

"An engine of war." Such as were invented by Demetrius Poliorchetes.

51. "A great enemy." See i. 36.

I. MACCABEES, XIV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 142.

52 He ordained also that that day should be kept every year with gladness. Moreover the hill of the temple that was by the tower he made stronger than it was, and there he dwelt himself with his company.

53 And when Simon saw that John his son was a valiant man, he made him captain of all the hosts ; and ^d he dwelt in Gazara.

CHAPTER XIV.

3 Demetrius is taken by the king of Persia. 4 The good deeds of Simon to his country. 18 The Lacedemonians and Romans renew their league with him. 26 A memorial of his acts is set up in Sion.

cir. 141.

NOW in the hundred threescore and twelfth year king Demetrius gathered his forces together, and went into Media, to get him help to fight against Tryphon.

2 But when Arsaces, the king of Persia and Media, heard that Demetrius was entered within his borders, he sent one of his princes to take him alive :

3 who went and smote the host of Demetrius, and took him, and brought him to Arsaces, by whom he was put in ward.

^a ch. 7. 50.

4 As for the land *of Judea*, ^a that was quiet all the days of Simon ; for he sought the good of his nation in such wise, as that evermore his authority and honour pleased them well.

5 And as he was honourable in all his acts, so in this, that he took Joppe for an haven, and made an entrance to the isles of the sea,

6 and enlarged the bounds of his nation, and recovered the country,

7 and gathered together a great number of captives, and had the dominion of Gazara, and Bethsura, and the tower, out of the which he took all uncleanness, neither was there any that resisted him.

53. "John his son." Celebrated afterwards as the High Priest John Hyrcanus.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Acts of Simon.

1. "Demetrius." Nicator. Almighty God overruled the intestine wars of Syrian princes among themselves, so as to be a cause of peace to His own people. See what follows.

I. MACCABEES, XIV.

8 Then did they till their ground in peace, and the earth gave her increase, and the trees of the field their fruit.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 141.

9 The ancient men sat all in the streets, communing together of ² good things, and the young men put on glorious and warlike apparel.

² Or, *the wealth of the land.*

10 He provided victuals for the cities, and set in them all manner of munition, so that his honourable name was renowned unto the end of the world.

11 He made peace in the land, and Israel rejoiced with great joy :

12 for ^b every man sat under his vine and his fig tree, and there was none to fray them :

^b 1 Kin. 4. 25.
Mic. 4. 4.
Zech. 3. 10.

13 neither was there any left in the land to fight against them : yea, the kings themselves were overthrown in those days.

14 Moreover he strengthened all those of his people that were brought low : the law he searched out ; and every contemner of the law and wicked person he took away.

15 He beautified the sanctuary, and multiplied the vessels of the temple.

16 Now when it was heard at Rome, and as far as Sparta, that Jonathan was dead, they were very sorry.

17 But as soon as they heard that his brother Simon was made high priest in his stead, and ruled the country, and the cities therein :

18 they wrote unto him in tables of brass, to renew the friendship and league which they had made with Judas and Jonathan his brethren :

19 which writings were read before the congregation at Jerusalem.

20 And this is the copy of the letters that the Lacedemonians sent ; The rulers of the Lacedemonians, with the city, unto ^c Simon the high priest, and the elders, and priests, and residue of the people of the Jews, our brethren, *send* greeting :

^c See chap. 12. 6.

21 The ambassadors that were sent unto our people certified us of your glory and honour : wherefore we were glad of their coming,

22 and did register the things that they spake in the ³ council of the people in this manner ; Nume-

³ Or, *publick records.*

I. MACCABEES, XIV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 141.

nus son of Antiochus, and Antipater son of Jason, the Jews' ambassadors, came unto us to renew the friendship they had with us.

23 And it pleased the people to entertain the men honourably, and to put the copy of their ambassage in publick records, to the end the people of the Lacedemonians might have a memorial thereof: furthermore we have written a copy thereof unto Simon the high priest.

24 After this Simon sent Numenius to Rome with a great shield of gold of a thousand pound weight, to confirm the league with them.

25 Whereof when the people heard, they said, What thanks shall we give to Simon and his sons?

26 For he and his brethren and the house of his father have established Israel, and chased away in fight their enemies from them, and confirmed their liberty.

27 So then they wrote *it* in tables of brass, which they set upon pillars in mount Sion: and this is the copy of the writing; The eighteenth day of *the month* Elul, in the hundred threescore and twelfth year, being the third year of Simon the high priest,

² Or,
Jerusalem,
peradventure by corruption and transposition of letters; or, as some think, *the common hall where they met to consult of matters of estate.*

28 at ²Saramel in the great congregation of the priests, and people, and rulers of the nation, and elders of the country, were these things notified unto us.

29 Forasmuch as oftentimes there have been wars in the country, wherein for the maintenance of their sanctuary, and the law, Simon the son of Mattathias, of the posterity of Jarib, together with his brethren, put themselves in jeopardy, and resisting the enemies of their nation did their nation great honour:

30 (for after that Jonathan, having gathered his nation together, and been their high priest, was added to his people,

31 their enemies purposed to invade their country,

24. "A thousand pound weight." Rather, probably, a thousand minæ in value.

27. "Elul." August and September. See Neh. vi. 15.

28. "Saramel." Perhaps a combination of Hebrew words, meaning "court of the people of God."

I. MACCABEES, XIV.

that they might destroy it, and lay hands on the sanctuary :

Before
CHRIST
cir. 141.

32 at which time Simon rose up, and fought for his nation, and spent much of his own substance, and armed ² the valiant men of his nation, and gave ² Or, *the men of war.* them wages,

33 and fortified the cities of Judea, together with Bethsura, that lieth upon the borders of Judea, where the ³ armour of the enemies had been before ; ³ Or, *weapons.* but he set a garrison of Jews there :

34 moreover he fortified Joppe, which lieth upon the sea, and ⁴ Gazara, that bordereth upon Azotus, ⁴ Or, *Gaza.* where the enemies had dwelt before : but he placed Jews there, and furnished them with all things convenient for the reparation thereof.)

35 The people therefore, seeing the acts of Simon, and unto what glory he thought to bring his nation, made him their governor and chief priest, because he had done all these things, and for the justice and faith which he kept to his nation, and for that he sought by all means to exalt his people.

36 For in his time things prospered in his hands, so that the heathen were taken out of their country, and they also that were in the city of David in Jerusalem, who had made themselves a tower, out of which they issued, and polluted all about the sanctuary, and did much hurt ⁵ in the holy ⁵ Or, *unto religion.* place :

37 but he placed Jews therein, and fortified it for the safety of the country and the city, and raised up the walls of Jerusalem.

38 King Demetrius also ^d confirmed him in the ^d ch. 10. 20. high priesthood according to those things, & 11. 57.

39 and made him one of his friends, and honoured him with great honour.

40 For he had heard say, that ^e the Romans had ^e ch. 8. 20. & 12. 3. called the Jews their friends and confederates and brethren ; and that they had entertained the ambassadors of Simon honourably ;

36. "Did much hurt in the holy place." Rather, "inflicted a severe wound on the sanctity" of the Temple and its worship.

I. MACCABEES, XIV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 141.
f ch. 4. 46.

41 also that the Jews and priests were well pleased that Simon should be their governor and high priest for ever, ^funtil there should arise a faithful prophet;

42 moreover that he should be their captain, and should take charge of the sanctuary, to set them over their works, and over the country, and over the armour, and over the fortresses, that, *I say*, he should take charge of the sanctuary;

43 beside this, that he should be obeyed of every man, and that all the writings in the country should be made in his name, and that ^ghe should be clothed in purple, and wear gold:

g ch. 10. 20,
89, & 11. 58.

44 also that it should be lawful for none of the people or priests to break any of these things, or to gainsay his words, or to gather an assembly in the country without him, or to be clothed in purple, or wear a buckle of gold:

45 and whosoever should do otherwise, or break any of these things, he should be punished.

46 Thus it liked all the people to deal with Simon, and to do as hath been said.

47 Then Simon accepted hereof, and was well pleased to be high priest, and captain and governor of the Jews and priests, and to defend them all.

48 So they commanded that this writing should be put in tables of brass, and that they should be set up within the compass of the sanctuary in a conspicuous place;

49 also that the copies thereof should be laid up in the treasury, to the end that Simon and his sons might have them.

CHAPTER XV.

4 *Antiochus desireth leave to pass through Judea, and granteth great honours to Simon and the Jews.* 16 *The Romans write to divers kings and nations to favour the Jews.* 27 *Antiochus quarrelleth with Simon,* 38 *and sendeth some to annoy Judea.*

41. "That." This word ought probably to be expunged. The author is here relating what the Jews did, not what Demetrius heard.

"For ever." The government and priesthood was to be hereditary in him and his sons continually.

"A faithful prophet;" iv. 46.

46. "To deal with Simon." Rather, to comply with Simon.

I. MACCABEES, XV.

MOREOVER Antiochus son of Demetrius the king sent letters from the isles of the sea unto Simon the priest and prince of the Jews, and to all the people ;

Before
CHRIST
cir. 140.

2 the contents whereof were these : King Antiochus to Simon the high priest and prince of his nation, and to the people of the Jews, greeting :

3 Forasmuch as certain pestilent men have usurped the kingdom of our fathers, and my purpose is to challenge it again, that I may restore it to the old estate, and to that end have gathered a multitude of foreign soldiers together, and prepared ships of war ;

4 my meaning also being to go through the country, that I may be avenged of them that have destroyed it, and made many cities in the kingdom desolate :

5 now therefore I confirm unto thee all the oblations which the kings before me granted thee, and whatsoever gifts besides they granted.

6 I give thee leave also to coin money for thy country with thine own stamp.

7 And as concerning Jerusalem and the sanctuary, let them be free ; and all the armour that thou hast made, and fortresses that thou hast built, and keep-est in thine hands, let them remain unto thee.

8 And if any thing be, or shall be, owing to the king, let it be forgiven thee from this time forth for evermore.

9 Furthermore, when we have obtained our kingdom, we will honour thee, and thy nation, and thy temple, with great honour, so that your honour shall be known throughout the world.

CHAPTER XV.

1. "Antiochus." Son of Demetrius Soter, and younger brother of Demetrius Nicator, who had been taken prisoner by Arsaces (xiv. 3.).

"Isles of the sea." Probably Crete.

2. "King Antiochus to Simon." To whom, notwithstanding these professions of friendship, he behaved perfidiously (vv. 27—40.).

3. "Pestilent men." Tryphon and his adherents.

6. "To coin money." It is doubtful whether the permission (which was probably soon withdrawn) was used by Simon ; the extant Hebrew shekels appear to be of a later date.

I. MACCABEES, XV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 139.

10 In the hundred threescore and fourteenth year went Antiochus into the land of his fathers: at which time all the forces came together unto him, so that few were left with Tryphon.

11 Wherefore being pursued by king Antiochus, he fled unto Dora, which lieth by the sea side:

12 for he saw that troubles came upon him all at once, and that his forces had forsaken him.

13 Then camped Antiochus against Dora, having with him an hundred and twenty thousand men of war, and eight thousand horsemen.

14 And when he had compassed the city round about, and joined ships close to the town on the sea side, he vexed the city by land and by sea, neither suffered he any to go out or in.

15 In the mean season came Numenius and his company from Rome, having letters to the kings and countries; wherein were written these things:

16 Lucius, consul of the Romans unto king Ptolemee, greeting:

17 The Jews' ambassadors, our friends and confederates, came unto us to renew the old friendship and league, being sent from Simon the high priest, and from the people of the Jews:

^a ch. 14. 24. 18 ^a and they brought a shield of gold of a thousand pound.

19 We thought it good therefore to write unto the kings and countries, that they should do them no harm, nor fight against them, their cities, or countries, nor yet aid their enemies against them.

20 It seemed also good to us to receive the shield of them.

21 If therefore there be any pestilent fellows, that have fled from their country unto you, deliver them unto Simon the high priest, that he may punish them according to their own law.

22 The same things wrote he likewise unto De-

11. "Dora." Nine Roman miles N. of Cæsarea; now Tantura or Tortura. See Josh. xi. 2.

15. "Numenius." See xiv. 22.

16. "Lucius." Calpurnius Piso, Consul with M. Popilius Lænas, B.C. 139.

I. MACCABEES, XV.

metrius the king, and Attalus, to ² Ariarathes, and Arsaces,

Before
CHRIST
cir. 139.

23 and to all the countries, and to ³ Sampsames, and the Lacedemonians, and to Delus, and Myndus, and Sicyon, and Caria, and Samos, and Pamphylia, and Lycia, and Halicarnassus, and Rhodus, and ⁴ Phaselis, and Cos, and Side, and Aradus, and Gortyna, and Cnidus, and Cyprus, and Cyrene.

² Or,
Arathes.
³ Or, *Sampsaces*, Lat.
Lampsacus.

⁴ Or, *Basilis.*

24 And the copy hereof they wrote to Simon the high priest.

25 So Antiochus the king camped against Dora the second *day*, ⁵ assaulting it continually, and making engines, by which means he shut up Tryphon, that he could neither go out nor in.

⁵ Gr. *bringing his forces to it.*

26 At that time Simon sent him two thousand chosen men to aid him; silver also, and gold, and much armour.

27 Nevertheless he would not receive them, but brake all the covenants which he had made with him afore, and became strange unto him.

28 Furthermore he sent unto him Athenobius, one of his friends, to commune with him, and say, Ye withhold Joppe and Gazara, with the tower that is in Jerusalem, which are cities of my realm.

29 The borders thereof ye have wasted, and done great hurt in the land, and got the dominion of many places within my kingdom.

30 Now therefore deliver the cities which ye have taken, and the tributes of the places, whereof ye have gotten dominion ⁶ without the borders of Judea:

⁶ Or, *except the borders, &c.*

31 or else give me for them five hundred talents of silver; and for the harm that ye have done, and the tributes of the cities, other five hundred talents: if not, we will come and ⁷ fight against you.

⁷ Or, *subdue you in fight.*

32 So Athenobius the king's friend came to Jerusalem: and when he saw the glory of Simon, and the cupboard of gold and silver plate, and his great

22. "Attalus." King of Pergamos.

"Ariarathes." King of Cappadocia.

"Arsaces." King of Parthia.

23. "Sampsames." Now Samsun, on the South coast of the Black Sea, between Sinope and Trebizond.

I. MACCABEES, XV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 139.

attendance, he was astonished, and told him the king's message.

33 Then answered Simon, and said unto him, We have neither taken other men's land, nor holden that which appertaineth to others, but the inheritance of our fathers, which our enemies had wrongfully in possession a certain time.

34 Wherefore we, having opportunity, hold the inheritance of our fathers.

35 And whereas thou demandest Joppe and Gazara, albeit they did great harm unto the people in our country, yet will we give an hundred talents for them. Hereunto Athenobius answered him not a word ;

36 but returned in a rage to the king, and made report unto him of these speeches, and of the glory of Simon, and of all that he had seen : whereupon the king was exceeding wroth.

37 In the mean time fled Tryphon by ship unto Orthosias.

38 Then the king made Cendebeus captain of the sea coast, and gave him an host of footmen and horsemen,

39 and commanded him to remove his host toward Judea : also he commanded him to build up² Cedron, and to fortify the gates, and to war against the people ; but as for the king *himself*, he pursued Tryphon.

² Or, *Gedor*.

40 So Cendebeus came to Jamnia, and began to provoke the people, and to invade Judea, and to take the people prisoners, and slay them.

41 And when he had built up Cedron, he set horsemen there, and an host of *footmen*, to the end that issuing out they might make outroads upon the ways of Judea, as the king had commanded him.

37. "Orthosias." On the Phœnician coast, between Tripolis and the mouth of the river Eleutherus. Thence Tryphon fled to his native place Apamea, where he was slain, after having usurped the Syrian throne for three years.

39. "Cedron." The site is uncertain; it seems to have been in Philistia (xvi. 10.).

I. MACCABEES, XVI.

CHAPTER XVI.

Before
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3 *Judas and John prevail against the forces sent by Antiochus. 11 The captain of Jericho inviteth Simon and two of his sons into his castle, and there treacherously murdereth them. 19 John is sought for, 22 and escapeth, and killeth those that sought for him.*

THEN came up John ^a from Gazara, and told ^a ch. 13. 53.
Simon his father what Cendebeus had done.

2 Wherefore Simon called his two eldest sons, Judas and John, and said unto them, ^b I, and my ^b ch. 14. 26.
brethren, and my father's house, have ever from our youth unto this day fought against the enemies of Israel; and ^c things have prospered so well in our ^c ch. 3. 6.
hands, that we have delivered Israel oftentimes. & 14. 36.

3 But now I am old, and ye, by *God's* mercy, are of a sufficient age: be ye instead of me and my brother, and go and fight for our nation, and the help from heaven be with you.

4 So he chose out of the country twenty thousand men of war with horsemen, who went out against Cendebeus, and rested that night at Modin.

5 And when as they rose in the morning, and went into the plain, behold, a mighty great host both of footmen and horsemen came against them: howbeit there was a water brook betwixt them.

6 So he and his people pitched over against them: and when he saw that the people were afraid to go over the water brook, he went first over himself, and then the men seeing him passed through after him.

7 *That done*, he divided his men, and set the horsemen in the midst of the footmen: for the enemies' horsemen were very many.

8 Then sounded they with the holy trumpets: whereupon Cendebeus and his host were put to flight, so that many of them were slain, and the remnant gat them to the strong hold.

9 At that time was Judas John's brother wounded; but John still followed after them, until he came to Cedron, which *Cendebeus* had built.

CHAPTER XVI.

Simon's death; his Son John (Hyrchanus) succeeds.

1. "Gazara;" xiii. 52.

I. MACCABEES, XVI.

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² Or, *Which when he had set on fire, they fled unto the towers in the fields of Azotus; and there were slain, &c.*
cir. 135.

10 ² So they fled even unto the towers in the fields of Azotus; wherefore he burned it with fire: so that there were slain of them about two thousand men. Afterward he returned into the land of Judea in peace.

11 Moreover in the plain of Jericho was Ptolemeus the son of Abubus made captain, and he had abundance of silver and gold:

12 for he was the high priest's son in law.

13 Wherefore his heart being lifted up, he thought to get the country to himself, and thereupon consulted deceitfully against Simon and his sons to destroy them.

14 Now Simon was visiting the cities that were in the country, and taking care for the good ordering of them; at which time he came down himself to Jericho with his sons, Mattathias and Judas, in the hundred threescore and seventeenth year, in the eleventh month, called Sabat:

15 where the son of Abubus receiving them deceitfully into a little hold, called Docus, which he had built, made them a great banquet: howbeit he had hid men there.

16 So when Simon and his sons had drunk largely, Ptolemee and his men rose up, and took their weapons, and came upon Simon into the banqueting place, and slew him, and his two sons, and certain of his servants.

17 In which doing he committed a great treachery, and recompensed evil for good.

18 Then Ptolemee wrote these things, and sent to the king, that he should send him an host to aid him, and he would deliver him the country and cities.

³ Gr.
captains of
thousands.

19 He sent others also to Gazara to kill John: and unto the ³tribunes he sent letters to come unto

11. "Ptolemeus." Simon's son-in-law and murderer (ver. 16.). Probably suborned by Antiochus (ver. 18.).

14. "Sabat." February (Zech. i. 7.).

15. "Docus." Now Ain Duk; a fountain N.W. of Jericho.

16. "Came upon Simon . . . and slew him and his two sons." All the five heroic Maccabean brothers died violent deaths,—the last by treachery. Verily, there is a judgment to come.

I. MACCABEES, XVI.

him, that he might give them silver, and gold, and rewards.

Before
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20 And others he sent to take Jerusalem, and the mountain of the temple.

21 Now one had run afore to Gazara, and told John that his father and brethren were slain, and, *quoth he, Ptolemee* hath sent to slay thee also.

22 Hereof when he heard, he was sore astonished: so he laid hands on them that were come to destroy him, and slew them; for he knew that they sought to make him away.

23 As concerning the rest of the acts of John, and his wars, and worthy deeds which he did, and the building of the walls which he made, and his doings,

24 behold, these are written in the chronicles of his priesthood, from the time he was made high priest after his father.

23. "John." Hyrcanus (compare 2 Macc. iii. 11.), the celebrated High Priest, leader, and governor of the Jews for thirty-one years.

24. "Chronicles of his priesthood." Not now extant; but its materials were probably used by Josephus (Bk. xiii. 8—10.), and by the author of the Fifth Book of the Maccabees (cp. 2 Macc. ii. 23, *Note*).

II. MACCABEES.

INTRODUCTION.

The Second Book of the Maccabees is an appropriate sequel to the First. It is like an historical homily on the wonderful successes vouchsafed by the God of Israel to the pious and patriotic heroism of Judas Maccabæus and his brethren, contending for the religion and laws of their country, and for the glory and worship of God, against Antiochus Epiphanes and the armies of Syria.

It is fitly introduced by two Epistles from the Jews of Judæa to their brethren in Egypt, in which the former endeavour to prevent the occurrence of a schism (which might arise from the erection of the Temple of Leontopolis in Egypt, after the pattern of that at Jerusalem), and to strengthen the allegiance of their brethren to Jerusalem, and to rivet their affections to the Temple and its worship, as the centre of national unity, and the source of national life. Accordingly, they remind them of the blessings bestowed upon the Temple since the return of their forefathers from the Babylonish captivity to the days of Judas Maccabæus, who purified it from heathen pollutions, and restored it to the worship of God; and they invite their brethren to unite with them in celebrating those annual religious festivals which commemorated those events.

The Second Book of Maccabees concentrates the attention of the reader on a short period of fourteen years, from the accession of the persecutor Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 175, to the death of Nicanor, B.C. 161, who had blasphemously threatened to destroy the Temple of Jerusalem.

The Second Book of the Maccabees differs greatly from the First. The First was written in Hebrew, and is distinguished by simplicity, severity, and reserve. The Second is distinguished by passionate fervour of imagination, and luxuriant exuberance of style. The Second Book is derived from a larger work of an African Hellenist, Jason of Cyrene, not now extant (ii. 23.); and while it shows that the memory of noble feats and sufferings of Hebrew martyrs and confessors,—such as Onias and Eleazar the priests, and the heroic mother and her five children, and of Judas Maccabæus and his brethren,—was cherished by the Hellenistic Jews in Egypt and Africa, it also proves that those Hellenistic Jews repaid the debt of gratitude which they owed to those Hebrew patriots and saints, by celebrating their virtues with the panegyrical tribute of Grecian rhetoric, and by commending them to the imitation of posterity.

INTRODUCTION.

The Second Book is like a commentary on the First. It represents the Hebrew nation as the favoured people of God ; it shows that the sufferings which it endured, were chastisements sent in mercy ; that they were due to its own sins, especially the sins of its high priests, such as Jason, Menelaus, and Alcimus, falling away from the law of God and the ritual of the Temple, and endeavouring to secularize the national religious institutions of their country, and to grecize Hebraism ; that as long as the priests were faithful, like Simon or Onias, God had interfered to defend Jerusalem and its Temple, as in the wonderful overthrow of Heliodorus in his sacrilegious attempt upon the Temple (chap. iii.), the record of which is introduced as a contrast to the subsequent narrative of the success of Antiochus Epiphanes, consequent on the treacherous subserviency of the unworthy successors of Onias in the priesthood at Jerusalem.

The victories of Judas Maccabæus and his brethren are represented by the writer as proofs that the God of the Hebrews is ever ready to succour His people in their distress, when they return to Him with repentance and faith, and resort to Him by prayer, and strive boldly for the truth, and for His honour and worship ; and that, though they may perish in the conflict, yet He has provided for them the future reward of a glorious resurrection and a blessed immortality (vii. 9, 11, 14, 23, 29, 36.), and future punishment for their adversaries (vii. 14.).

He shows that, even in this world, God exercises retributive justice on the enemies of His people. For example, the traitorous High Priest Jason, who had driven many Jews from their own land, was banished and died miserably on a foreign soil (v. 7—10.). Antiochus Epiphanes, who had had no bowels of compassion for those whom he tortured for their faith, died with intestine anguish and shame (ix. 7—12.). Menelaus the high priest, who profaned the ashes of the holy fire in the Temple, received his death from hot ashes at the hand of those to whom he had betrayed his country and religion (xiii. 8.). The blasphemous Nicanor was punished in the tongue and hand, with which he had blasphemed God, and had menaced His holy house (xiv. 33 ; xv. 33.).

The writer expresses a hope, that God will gather together His people in one (i. 27, 29 ; ii. 17, 18.) ; a hope that has been fulfilled in Christ.

The composition of the book in its present form is not earlier than B.C. 124 (see i. 10.).

II. MACCABEES, I.

CHAPTER I.

¹ *A letter of the Jews from Jerusalem to them of Egypt, to thank God for the death of Antiochus.* 19 *Of the fire that was hid in the pit.* 24 *The prayer of Neemias.*

cir. 144. **T**HE brethren, the Jews that be at Jerusalem and in the land of Judea, wish unto the brethren, the Jews that are throughout Egypt, health and peace :

2 God be gracious unto you, and remember his covenant that he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, his faithful servants ;

3 and give you all an heart to serve him, and to do his will, with a good courage and a willing mind ;

4 and open your hearts in his law and commandments, and send you peace,

5 and hear your prayers, and be at one with you, and never forsake you in time of trouble.

6 And now we be here praying for you.

cir. 144. 7 What time as Demetrius reigned, in the hundred threescore and ninth year, we the Jews wrote unto you in the extremity of trouble that came upon us in those years, from the time that ^a Jason and his company revolted from the holy land and kingdom,

a ch. 4. 7.

8 and burned the porch, and shed innocent blood : then we prayed unto the Lord, and were heard ; we offered also sacrifices and fine flour, and lighted the lamps, and set forth the loaves.

^b Lev. 23. 34. 9 And now see that ye keep the feast of ^b tabernacles in the month Casleu.

CHAPTER I.

Letter from the Jews at Jerusalem to their Brethren in Egypt.

The date of this letter is B.C. 124. See i. 10.

7. "Demetrius reigned." Demetrius Nicator, who began to reign B.C. 146. See 1 Macc. xi. 15—19.

"In the hundred threescore and ninth year." B.C. 144.

"Jason;" iv. 7—17.

9. "Keep the feast of tabernacles in the month Casleu;" i.e. keep *that* feast for the dedication of the Temple (ver. 18. 1 Macc. iv. 52.) in the month Casleu (December), which resembles the Feast of Tabernacles, when Solomon dedicated the Temple (1 Kin. viii. 65.), and Jeshua and his companions set up the altar in the Temple (Ezra iii. 2.), and Nehemiah celebrated the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. viii. 16.) in the month of Tisri (September).

II. MACCABEES, I.

10 In the hundred fourscore and eighth year, the people that were at Jerusalem and in Judea, and the council, and Judas, sent greeting and health unto Aristobulus, king Ptolemeus' master, who was of the stock of the anointed priests, and to the Jews that were in Egypt:

11 insomuch as God hath delivered us from great perils, we thank him highly, as having been in battle against a king.

12 For he cast them out that fought within the holy city.

13 For when the leader was come into Persia, and the army with him that seemed invincible, they were slain in the temple of Nanea by the deceit of Nanea's priests.

14 For Antiochus, as though he would marry her,

10. "In the hundred fourscore and eighth year." These words are the date of the foregoing epistle, *not*, as here printed, of what follows. See the similar mode of dating at the end of epistles in xi. 21, 33, 38. The date is B.C. 124. The author of this book begins his year six months *later* than the author of the former book. The difference arises from the difference between the beginning of the civil and ecclesiastical year.

Second Letter.

Whether this letter is genuine is doubtful; the arguments on both sides may be seen stated by Keil.

"Judas." The celebrated Judas Maccabæus, who survived Antiochus Epiphanes nearly four years.

"Aristobulus." Tutor of Ptolemy Philometor, a peripatetic philosopher, author of an allegorical exposition of the Pentateuch, which he dedicated to his royal pupil.

11. "As having been in battle." As "those who would engage in battle."

"A king." Antiochus Epiphanes.

12. "He." That is, God.

13. "The leader." Antiochus.

13—16. On the last expedition and death of Antiochus, compare Macc. vi. 1—16, and below, ix. 1—29. The present narrative differs in various important respects from those statements. The differences may perhaps be accounted for by the supposition that the authors of this epistle may have written it immediately after the first report of the death of Antiochus, and before the arrival of more minute details concerning it. The letter was written *before* the keeping of the Feast of Dedication (ver. 18.).

13. "The army." Body-guard; only a few were destroyed in the temple itself. See ver. 15.

"Nanea." Probably the Persian Artemis.

II. MACCABEES, I.

came into the place, and his friends that were with him, to receive money in name of a dowry.

15 Which when the priests of Nanea had set forth, and he was entered with a small company into the compass of the temple, they shut the temple as soon as Antiochus was come in :

16 and opening a privy door of the roof, they threw stones like thunderbolts, and struck down the captain, hewed them in pieces, smote off their heads, and cast them to those that were without.

17 Blessed be our God in all things, who hath delivered up the ungodly.

18 Therefore whereas we are now purposed ^c to keep the purification of the temple upon the five and twentieth day of *the month* ^d Casleu, we thought it necessary to certify you thereof, that ye also might keep *it, as the feast* of the tabernacles, and of the fire, *which was given us* when Neemias offered sacrifice, after that he had builded the temple and the altar.

^c 1 Macc. 4. 59.
ch. 2. 16.

^d Lev. 23. 24,
27, 34.
Num. 29. 1.

19 For when our fathers were led into Persia, the priests that were then devout took the fire of the altar privily, and hid it in an hollow place of a pit without water, where they kept *it* sure, so that the place was unknown to all men.

20 Now after many years, when it pleased God, Neemias, being sent from the king of Persia, did send of the posterity of those priests that had hid it to the fire : but when they told us they found no fire, but thick water ;

21 then commanded he them to draw it up, and to bring it ; and when the sacrifices were laid on, Neemias commanded the priests to sprinkle the wood and the things laid thereupon with the water.

22 When this was done, and the time came that the sun shone, which afore was hid in the cloud,

15. "Compass." Precinct.

18—36. This history concerning the sacred fire, is not confirmed by the Canonical Book of Nehemiah (chap. viii.) See also below, x. 2, where the fire is said to have been kindled by striking two stones. It appears to have been a popular legend, designed to enhance the dignity of the restored Temple, and to place it on a par with that of Solomon (2 Chr. vii. 1—3.).

II. MACCABEES, I.

there was a great fire kindled, so that every man marvelled.

23 And the priests made a prayer whilst the sacrifice was consuming, *I say*, both the priests, and all *the rest*, Jonathan beginning, and the rest answering thereunto, as Neemias did.

24 And the prayer was after this manner; O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things, who art fearful and strong, and righteous, and merciful, and the only and gracious King,

25 the only giver of all things, the only just, almighty, and everlasting, thou that deliverest Israel from all trouble, and didst choose the fathers, and sanctify them:

26 receive the sacrifice for thy whole people Israel, and preserve thine own portion, and sanctify it.

27 Gather those together that are scattered from us, deliver them that serve among the heathen, look upon them that are despised and abhorred, and let the heathen know that thou art our God.

28 Punish them that oppress us, and with pride do us wrong.

29 Plant thy people again in thy holy place, ^e as ^e Dent. 30. 5.
Moses hath spoken. ch. 2. 18.

30 And the priests sung psalms of thanksgiving.

31 Now when the sacrifice was consumed, Neemias commanded the water that was left to be poured on the great stones.

32 When this was done, there was kindled a flame: but it was consumed by the light that shined from the altar.

33 So when this matter was known, it was told the king of Persia, that in the place, where the priests that were led away had hid the fire, there appeared water, and that ²Neemias had purified the sacrifices therewith. ² Or, Neemias his company.

34 Then the king, inclosing the place, made it holy, after he had tried the matter.

35 And the king took many gifts, and bestowed thereof on those whom he would gratify.

23. "Jonathan." Supposed by some to be the same as mentioned in Neh. xii. 11.

II. MACCABEES, II.

36 And Neemias called this thing Naphthar, which is as much as to say, a cleansing: but many men call it Nephi.

CHAPTER II.

¹ What Jeremy the prophet did. ⁵ How he hid the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar. ¹³ What Neemias and Judas wrote. ²⁰ What Jason wrote in five books: ²⁵ and how those were abridged by the author of this book.

^a ch. 1. 19. IT is also found in the records, that Jeremy the prophet commanded them that were carried away to take of the fire, ^a as it hath been signified:

^b Bar. 6. 4. 2 and how that the prophet, having given them the law, charged them not to forget the commandments of the Lord, and that they should not err in their minds, ^b when they see images of silver and gold, with their ornaments.

3 And with other such speeches exhorted he them, that the law should not depart from their hearts.

^c Deut. 32. 49. 4 It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into ^c the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God.

5 And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door.

6 And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it.

36. "Naphthar." Probably a Zendish word for *clean water*.
"Naphthar," "Nephi." These words may perhaps be connected with *Naphtha*, a pure, water-like oil (petroleum), found in mineral wells in Persia.

CHAPTER II.

The legendary traditions in this chapter (vv. 1—19.), have doubtless some historical foundation.

The command of Jeremiah to the Jews, to take heed of falling into Babylonish idolatry during the captivity, rests on the same basis as Bar. vi. 4—73 (the Epistle of Jeremy).

The legend that the tabernacle, and ark, and altar of incense, were hidden by Jeremiah in the cave at Horeb where Moses had a vision of God, till God in His mercy should gather His people again, may have originated in the declaration of the prophet concerning the future coming of the Messiah to fulfil the Law, and to teach His people all things, and to gather them together in Himself and in His Church (Jer. xxxiii. 3—8;—xxxi. 33, 34; xxxii. 37—40; xxxiii. 14—18.).

II. MACCABEES, II.

7 Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy.

8 Then shall the Lord shew them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, ^das it was shewed under Moses, and ^dEx. 34. 5.
^eas when Solomon desired that the place might be ^e1 Kin. 8. 10.
honourably sanctified.

9 It was also declared, that he being wise ^foffered ^f1 Kin. 8. 62,
the sacrifice of dedication, and of the finishing of the ^{&c.}
temple.

10 And ^gas when Moses prayed unto the Lord, ^gLev. 9. 23,
the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the ^{24.}
sacrifices: even ^hso prayed Solomon also, and the ^h2 Chr. 7. 1.
fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt
offerings.

11 And ⁱMoses said, Because the sin offering was ⁱLev. 10. 16,
not to be eaten, it was consumed. ^{&c.}

12 So Solomon kept those eight days.

13 The same things also were reported in the writings and commentaries of Neemias; and how he founding a library gathered together the acts of the kings, and the prophets, and of David, and the epistles of the kings concerning the holy gifts.

14 In like manner also Judas gathered together all those things that ²were lost by reason of the war ²Or, *fell out during the war.*
we had, and they remain with us.

15 Wherefore if ye have need thereof, send some to fetch them unto you.

16 Whereas we then ^kare about to celebrate the ^kch. 1. 18.

9. "It was also declared." In the writing.

11. "It was consumed." By fire from heaven. The writers of the epistle suggest that the Maccabæan dedication of the Temple was honoured by God in the same way as the prayer and sacrifice in the Tabernacle under Moses, and in the Temple under Solomon, had been honoured by Him.

The legend that the sacred writings had been gathered together in a library by Nehemiah (vv. 13, 14.), rests on the true history of the compilation of the Canon of the Old Testament, under Ezra and Malachi.

The story concerning the gathering together of the sacred books by Judas Maccabæus is grounded on the fact of the multiplication of copies of the Old Testament, in lieu of those which had been destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes (i. 56.).

II. MACCABEES, II.

purification, we have written unto you, and ye shall do well, if ye keep the same days.

² Gr. Now God it is that saved all his people, and rendered the heritage, and the kingdom, and the priesthood, and the sanctuary, as he promised in the law: for we hope in God that he will shortly, &c.
¹ ch. 1. 29.

17 ² We hope also, that the God, that delivered all his people, and gave them all an heritage, and the kingdom, and the priesthood, and the sanctuary,

18 ¹ as he promised in the law, will shortly have mercy upon us, and gather us together out of every land under heaven into the holy place: for he hath delivered us out of great troubles, and hath purified the place.

19 Now as concerning Judas Maccabeus, and his brethren, and the purification of the great temple, and the dedication of the altar,

20 and the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes, and Eupator his son,

^m ch. 3. 24.
& 5. 2.
& 10. 29.
& 11. 8.
& 15. 12.

21 and ^m the manifest signs that came from heaven unto those that behaved themselves manfully to their honour for Judaism: so that, being but a few, they overcame the whole country, and chased barbarous multitudes,

22 and recovered again the temple renowned all the world over, and freed the city, and upheld the laws which were going down, the Lord being gracious unto them with all favour:

23 *all these things, I say*, being declared by Jason of Cyrene in five books, we will assay to abridge in one volume.

24 For considering the infinite number, and the

17. "Sanctuary." Or, sanctification. The reference is to the promise in Exod. xix. 6.

19. "Now as concerning." The historical portion of the book begins here.

"The great temple." At Jerusalem; as distinguished from the Egyptian copy of it at Leontopolis.

22. "Which were going down." In danger of being destroyed.

23. "Jason of Cyrene." In North Africa. He was probably an Hellenistic Jew. Compare Acts ii. 10. The fact that an African Jew wrote five books on the history of the Maccabees, and on their struggle with Antiochus, is a proof of the extension of their renown to distant regions of the world; and their glory has been further diffused by the Christian Church instituting a festival (on August 1.) in their honour, and by the homilies of Christian Fathers in the Eastern and Western Church.

24. "Infinite number." Rather, the abundance of numbers (of dates, of troops, &c.).

II. MACCABEES, III.

difficulty which they find that desire to look into the narrations of the story, for the variety of the matter,

25 we have been careful, that they that will read may have delight, and that they that are desirous to commit to memory might have ease, and that all into whose hands it comes might have profit.

26 Therefore to us, that have taken upon us this painful labour of abridging, it was not easy, but a matter of sweat and watching ;

27 even as it is no ease unto him that prepareth a banquet, and seeketh the benefit of others : yet ² for the pleasuring of many we will undertake gladly this great pains ; ² Or, to deserve well of many.

28 leaving to the author the exact handling of every particular, and labouring to follow the rules of an abridgement.

29 For as the master builder of a new house must care for the whole building ; but he that undertaketh to set it out, and paint it, must seek out fit things for the adorning thereof : even so I think it is with us.

30 To stand upon every point, and go over things at large, and to be curious in particulars, belongeth to the first author of the story :

31 but to use brevity, and avoid much labouring of the work, is to be granted to him that will make an abridgement.

32 Here then will we begin the story : only adding thus much to that which hath been said, that it is a foolish thing to make a long prologue, and to be short in the story itself.

CHAPTER III.

1 Of the honour done to the temple by the kings of the Gentiles. 4 Simon uttereth what treasures are in the temple. 7 Heliodorus is sent to take them away. 24 He is stricken of God, and healed at the prayer of Onias.

NOW when the holy city was inhabited with all peace, and the laws were kept very well, because cir. 187.

28. "The rules." Rather, the pattern.

29. "To set it out." To adorn with encaustic.

II. MACCABEES, III.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 187.

of the godliness of Onias the high priest, and his hatred of wickedness,

2 it came to pass that even the kings themselves did honour the place, and magnify the temple with their best gifts ;

3 insomuch that Seleucus king of Asia of his own revenues bare all the costs belonging to the service of the sacrifices.

4 But one Simon of the tribe of Benjamin, who was made governor of the temple, fell out with the high priest about disorder in the city.

5 And when he could not overcome Onias, he gat him to Apollonius *the son* of Thraseas, who then was governor of Celosyria and Phenice,

6 and told him that the treasury in Jerusalem was full of infinite sums of money, so that the multitude of their riches, which did not pertain to the account of the sacrifices, was innumerable, and that it was possible to bring all into the king's hand.

7 Now when Apollonius came to the king, and had shewed him of the money whereof he was told, the king chose out Heliodorus his treasurer, and sent him with a commandment to bring him the foresaid money.

8 So forthwith Heliodorus took his journey, under a colour of visiting the cities of Celosyria and Phenice, but indeed to fulfil the king's purpose.

9 And when he was come to Jerusalem, and had been courteously received of the high priest of the city, he told him what intelligence was given of the money, and declared wherefore he came, and asked if these things were so indeed.

10 Then the high priest told him that there was such money laid up for the relief of widows and fatherless children :

CHAPTER III.

1. "Onias." The Third; became high priest, B.C. 191.

3. "Seleucus." Philopator, son of Antiochus the Great, and elder brother of Antiochus Epiphanes. He reigned from B.C. 187 to 175.

4. "About disorder." Rather, "about affairs of the market."

7. "With a commandment to bring him the foresaid money."
Compare Daniel's prophecy, xi. 20, on the character of Seleucus.

II. MACCABEES, III.

11 and that some of it belonged to Hircanus son of Tobias, a man of great dignity, and not as that wicked Simon had misinformed: the sum whereof in all was four hundred talents of silver, and two hundred of gold:

12 and that it was altogether impossible that such wrongs should be done unto them, that had committed it to the holiness of the place, and to the majesty and inviolable sanctity of the temple, honoured over all the world.

13 But Heliodorus, because of the king's commandment given him, said, That in any wise it must be brought into the king's treasury.

14 So at the day which he appointed he entered in to order this matter: wherefore there was no small agony throughout the whole city.

15 But the priests, prostrating themselves before the altar in their priests' vestments, called unto heaven upon him that ^amade a law concerning things given to be kept, that they should safely be preserved for such as had committed them to be kept.

16 Then whoso had looked the high priest in the face, it would have wounded his heart: for his countenance and the changing of his colour declared the inward agony of his mind.

17 For the man was so compassed with fear and horror of the body, that it was manifest to them that looked upon him, what sorrow he had now in his heart.

18 Others ran flocking out of their houses ²to the general supplication, because the place was like to come into contempt.

19 And the women, girt with sackcloth under their breasts, abounded in the streets, and the virgins that were kept in ran, some to the gates, and some to the walls, and others looked out of the windows.

20 And all, holding their hands toward heaven, made supplication.

21 Then it would have pitied a man to see the falling down of the multitude of all sorts, and the ³fear of the high priest, being in such an agony.

22 They then called upon the Almighty Lord to

Before
CHRIST
cir. 187.

^a Ex. 22. 7,
&c.

² Or, to make
general sup-
plication.

³ Gr.
expectation.

II. MACCABEES, III.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 187.

keep the things committed of trust safe and sure for those that had committed them.

23 Nevertheless Heliodorus executed that which was decreed.

24 Now as he was there present himself with his guard about the treasury, the ² Lord of spirits, and the Prince of all power, caused a great apparition, so that all that presumed to come in with him were astonished at the power of God, and fainted, and were sore afraid.

25 For there appeared unto them an horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at Heliodorus with his forefeet, and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold.

26 Moreover two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes.

27 And Heliodorus fell suddenly unto the ground, and was compassed with great darkness: but they that were with him took him up, and put him into a litter.

28 Thus him, that lately came with a great train and with all his guard into the said treasury, they carried out, being unable to help himself with his weapons: and manifestly they acknowledged the power of God:

29 for he by the hand of God was cast down, and lay speechless without all hope of life.

30 But they praised the Lord, that had miracu-

24. "A great apparition." Vividly represented in the picture by Raffaele, in the Vatican at Rome. The history of this marvellous apparition appears to be confirmed by Polybius (who was acquainted with Demetrius, the son of Seleucus) in *Josephus*, XII. iii. 3.

Ptolemy Philopator (B.C. 217.) had attempted to enter the Holy of Holies, but was successfully resisted by the faithful High Priest Simon, and was smitten with paralysis in the attempt (3 Macc. i. 11; ii. 22.).

Alcimus, the renegade high priest (xix. 3, 13.), was smitten in a sacrilegious act (1 Macc. ix. 54, 57.).

26. "Scourged him." So Christ drove the buyers out of the Temple with a scourge of small cords (St. John ii. 15.).

II. MACCABEES, III.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 187.

lously honoured his own place: for the temple, which a little afore was full of fear and trouble, when the Almighty Lord appeared, was filled with joy and gladness.

31 Then straightways certain of Heliodorus' friends prayed Onias, that he would call upon the most High to grant him his life, who lay ready to give up the ghost.

32 So the high priest, suspecting lest the king should misconceive that some treachery had been done to Heliodorus by the Jews, offered a sacrifice for the health of the man.

33 Now as the high priest was making an atonement, the same young men in the same clothing appeared and stood beside Heliodorus, saying, Give Onias the high priest great thanks, insomuch as for his sake the Lord hath granted thee life:

34 and seeing that thou hast been scourged from heaven, declare unto all men the mighty power of God. And when they had spoken these words, they appeared no more.

35 So Heliodorus, after he had offered sacrifice unto the Lord, and made great vows unto him that had saved his life, and saluted Onias, returned with his host to the king.

36 Then testified he to all men the works of the great God, which he had seen with his eyes.

37 And when the king asked Heliodorus, who might be a fit man to be sent yet once again to Jerusalem, he said,

38 If thou hast any enemy or traitor, send him thither, and thou shalt receive him well scourged, if he escape with his life: for in that place, no doubt, there is an especial power of God.

39 For he that dwelleth in heaven hath his eye on that place, and defendeth it; and he beateth and destroyeth them that come to hurt it.

40 And the things concerning Heliodorus, and the keeping of the treasury, fell out on this sort.

CHAPTER IV.

1 Simon slandereth Onias. 7 Jason, by corrupting the king, obtaineth the office of the high priest. 24 Menelaus getteth the same from Jason by the like corruption. 31 Andronicus traitorously murdereth Onias.

II. MACCABEES, IV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 187.

36 *The king being informed thereof, causeth Andronicus to be put to death.* 39 *The wickedness of Lysimachus, by the instigation of Menelaus.*

^a ch. 3. 4.

THIS Simon now, ^a of whom we spake afore, having been a bewrayer of the money, and of his country, slandered Onias, as if he had terrified Heliodorus, and been the worker of these evils.

2 Thus was he bold to call him a traitor, that had deserved well of the city, and tendered his own nation, and was so zealous of the laws.

3 But when their hatred went so far, that by one of Simon's faction murders were committed,

4 Onias seeing the danger of this contention, and that Apollonius, as being the governor of Celosyria and Phenice, did rage, and increase Simon's malice,

5 he went to the king, not to be an accuser of his countrymen, but seeking the good of all, both publick and private :

6 for he saw that it was impossible that the state should continue quiet, and Simon leave his folly, unless the king did look thereunto.

cir. 175.

7 But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, called Epiphanes, took the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias laboured underhand to be high priest,

8 promising unto the king by intercession three hundred and threescore talents of silver, and of another revenue eighty talents :

9 beside this, he promised to assign an hundred and fifty more, if he might have licence to set him up ^b a place for exercise, and for the training up of youth in the fashions of the heathen, and to write them of Jerusalem *by the name of* Antiochians.

10 Which when the king had granted, and he had gotten into his hand the rule, he forthwith brought his own nation to the Greekish fashion.

^b 1 Macc. i. 14.

CHAPTER IV.

7. "Jason." His Hebrew name was Joshua (Jesus), the leader of the Israelites, which, as Josephus relates, was Grecized by him into Jason, the leader of the Argonauts.

8. "Intercession." Or, interview.

9. "A place for exercise." Or, gymnasium (1 Macc. i. 14.).

"Training up of youth." Perhaps, in the original, we ought to read "ephebëum" (with Grotius), for "ephebian."

II. MACCABEES, IV.

11 And the royal privileges granted of special favour to the Jews by the means of ^c John the father of Eupolemus, who went ambassador to Rome for amity and aid, he took away; and putting down the governments which were according to the law, he brought up new customs against the law:

Before
CHRIST
cir. 175.
^c See 1 Macc.
8. 17.

12 for he built gladly a place of exercise under the tower itself, and brought the chief young men under his subjection, and made them wear a hat.

13 Now such was the height of Greek fashions, and increase of heathenish manners, through the exceeding profaneness of Jason, that ungodly wretch, and no high priest;

14 that the priests had no courage to serve any more at the altar, but despising the temple, and neglecting the sacrifices, hastened to be partakers of the unlawful allowance in the place of exercise, after the game of ² Discus called them forth;

² Or, *the Discus*, which was a stone with an hole in the midst.

15 not setting by the honours of their fathers, but liking the glory of the Grecians best of all.

16 By reason whereof sore calamity came upon them: for they had them to be their enemies and avengers, whose custom they followed so earnestly, and unto whom they desired to be like in all things.

17 For it is not a light thing to do wickedly against the laws of God: but the time following shall declare these things.

18 Now when the game that was used every fifth year was kept at Tyrus, the king being present,

cir. 174.

19 this ungracious Jason sent ³ special messengers from Jerusalem, who were Antiochians, to carry three hundred drachms of silver to the sacrifice of Hercules, which even the bearers thereof thought fit

³ Gr. *who were religious ambassadors*.

12. "Made them wear a hat." Literally, "Brought them under the hat." The hat with broad brim (such as may be seen in the Pan-athenaic procession in the Elgin Marbles), worn by young Athenians in the palaestra, and on horseback, like the hat of Hermes.

14. "Discus." Or quoit, of iron. The game of the discus was the summons to the palaestra.

18. "The game." The quinquennial games in honour of the Tyrian Hercules.

19. "Three hundred drachms." Probably of more value than the Attic coin of that name.

II. MACCABEES, IV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 174.

not to bestow upon the sacrifice, because it was not convenient, but to be reserved for other charges.

20 This money then, in regard of the sender, was appointed to Hercules' sacrifice; but because of the bearers thereof, it was employed to the making of gallies.

cir. 173.

² Or, *enthronizing*.

21 Now when Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent into Egypt for the ² coronation of king *Ptolemeus* Philometor, Antiochus, understanding him not to be well affected to his affairs, provided for his own safety: whereupon he came to Joppe, and from thence to Jerusalem:

22 where he was honourably received of Jason, and of the city, and was brought in with torch light, and with great shoutings: and so afterward went with his host unto Phenice.

cir. 172.

23 Three years afterward Jason sent Menelaus, the aforesaid Simon's brother, to bear the money unto the king, and to put him in mind of certain necessary matters.

24 But he being brought to the presence of the king, when he had magnified him for the glorious appearance of his power, got the priesthood to himself, offering more than Jason by three hundred talents of silver.

25 So he came with the king's mandate, bringing nothing worthy the high priesthood, but having the fury of a cruel tyrant, and the rage of a savage beast.

26 Then Jason, who had undermined his own brother, being undermined by another, was compelled to flee into the country of the Ammonites.

cir. 171.

27 So Menelaus got the principality: but as for the money that he had promised unto the king, he took no good order for it, albeit Sostratus the ruler of the castle required it:

23. "Menelaus, . . . Simon's brother." Josephus says that his Hebrew name was Onias (it was Hellenized by him into Menelaus, the name of the King of Sparta), and that he was brother of Jason.

24. "Being brought to the presence of." Rather, "having been recommended to."

II. MACCABEES, IV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 171.

28 for unto him appertained the gathering of the customs. Wherefore they were both called before the king.

29 Now Menelaus left his brother Lysimachus in his stead in the priesthood; and Sostratus *left* Crates, who was governor of the Cyprians.

30 While those things were in doing, they of Tarsus and Mallos made insurrection, because they were given to the king's concubine, called Antiochis.

31 Then came the king in all haste to appease matters, leaving Andronicus, a man in authority, for his deputy.

32 Now Menelaus, supposing that he had gotten a convenient time, stole certain vessels of gold out of the temple, and gave some of them to Andronicus, and some he sold into Tyrus and the cities round about.

33 Which when Onias knew of a surety, he re-proved him, and withdrew himself into a sanctuary at Daphne, that lieth by Antiochia.

34 Wherefore Menelaus, taking Andronicus apart, prayed him to get Onias into his hands; who being persuaded thereunto, and coming to Onias in deceit, gave him his right hand with oaths; and though he were suspected *by him*, yet persuaded he him to come forth of the sanctuary: whom forthwith he shut up without regard of justice.

35 For the which cause not only the Jews, but many also of other nations, took great indignation, and were much grieved for the unjust murder of the man.

36 And when the king was come again from the places about Cilicia, the Jews that were in the city, and certain of the Greeks that abhorred the fact also, complained because Onias was slain without cause.

37 Therefore Antiochus was heartily sorry, and

28. "The gathering of the customs." Or, "the exaction of the monies."

30. "Tarsus and Mallos." In Cilicia.

33. "Daphne." The celebrated grove of Apollo, near Antioch.

II. MACCABEES, IV.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 171.

moved to pity, and wept, because of the sober and modest behaviour of him that was dead.

38 And being kindled with anger, forthwith he took away Andronicus his purple, and rent off his clothes, and leading him through the whole city unto that very place, where he had committed impiety against Onias, there slew he the cursed murderer. Thus the Lord rewarded him his punishment, as he had deserved.

cir. 170.

39 Now when many sacrileges had been committed in the city by Lysimachus with the consent of Menelaus, and the bruit thereof was spread abroad, the multitude gathered themselves together against Lysimachus, many vessels of gold being already carried away.

² Or.
Tyrannus.

40 Whereupon the common people rising, and being filled with rage, Lysimachus armed about three thousand men, and began first to offer violence; one ²Auranus being the leader, a man far gone in years, and no less in folly.

41 They then seeing the attempt of Lysimachus, some of them caught stones, some clubs, others taking handfuls of dust, that was next at hand, cast them all together upon Lysimachus, and those that set upon them.

42 Thus many of them they wounded, and some they struck to the ground, and all *of them* they forced to flee: but as for the churchrobber himself, him they killed beside the treasury.

43 Of these matters therefore there was an accusation laid against Menelaus.

44 Now when the king came to Tyrus, three men that were sent from the senate pleaded the cause before him:

45 but Menelaus, being now convicted, promised ^aPtolemee the *son* of Dorymenes to give him much money, if he would pacify the king toward him.

46 Whereupon Ptolemee taking the king aside into a certain gallery, as it were to take the air, brought him to be of another mind:

47 insomuch that he discharged Menelaus from the accusations, who notwithstanding was cause of all the mischief: and those poor men, who, if they

^d 1 Macc. 3.
38.

II. MACCABEES, V.

had told their cause, yea, before the Scythians, should have been judged innocent, them he condemned to death.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 170.

48 Thus they that followed the matter for the city, and for the people, and for the holy vessels, did soon suffer unjust punishment.

49 Wherefore even they of Tyrus, moved with hatred of that wicked deed, caused them to be honourably buried.

50 And so through the covetousness of them that were of power Menelaus remained still in authority, increasing in malice, and being a great traitor to the citizens.

CHAPTER V.

2 Of the signs and tokens seen in Jerusalem. 6 Of the end and wickedness of Jason. 11 The pursuit of Antiochus against the Jews. 15 The spoiling of the temple. 27 Maccabeus fleeth into the wilderness.

ABOUT the same time Antiochus prepared his second voyage into Egypt:

2 and then it happened, that through all the city, for the space almost of forty days, there were seen horsemen running in the air, in cloth of gold, and armed with lances, like a band of soldiers,

3 and troops of horsemen in array, encountering and running one against another, with shaking of shields, and multitude of ² pikes, and drawing of ² Or, staves. swords, and casting of darts, and glittering of golden ornaments, and harness of all sorts.

4 Wherefore every man prayed that that apparition might turn to good.

5 Now when there was gone forth a false rumour, as though Antiochus had been dead, Jason took at the least a thousand men, and suddenly made an assault upon the city; and they that were upon the walls being put back, and the city at length taken, Menelaus fled into the castle:

CHAPTER V.

2. "For the space almost of forty days, there were seen horsemen running in the air." Similar portents are reported by Josephus to have preceded the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; and similar signs may be looked for before the coming of Christ (St. Matt. xxiv. 29. St. Luke xxi. 25. Rev. vi. 12.).

3. "Pikes." Lauces.

II. MACCABEES, V.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 170.

6 but Jason slew his own citizens without mercy, not considering that to get the day of them of his own nation would be a most unhappy day for him; but thinking they had been *his* enemies, and not *his* countrymen, whom he conquered.

7 Howbeit for all this he obtained not the principality, but at the last received shame for the reward of his treason, and fled again into the country of the Ammonites.

² Or, executioner.

8 In the end therefore he had an unhappy return, being accused before Aretas the king of the Arabians, fleeing from city to city, pursued of all men, hated as a forsaker of the laws, and being had in abomination as an open ²enemy of his country and countrymen, he was cast out into Egypt.

9 Thus he that had driven many out of their country perished in a strange land, retiring to the Lacedemonians, and thinking *there* to find succour by reason of his kindred :

10 and he that had cast out many unburied had none to mourn for him, nor any solemn funerals at all, nor sepulchre with his fathers.

^a 1 Macc. 1.
10, &c.

11 Now when this that was done came to the king's ear, he thought that Judea had revolted : whereupon ^aremoving out of Egypt in a furious mind, he took the city by force of arms,

12 and commanded his men of war not to spare such as they met, and to slay such as went up upon the houses.

13 Thus there was killing of young and old, making away of men, women, and children, slaying of virgins and infants.

14 And there were destroyed within the space of three whole days fourscore thousand, whereof forty thousand were slain in the conflict ; and no fewer sold than slain.

6. "Not considering," &c. "That success against his own kindred was the worst defeat."

8. "Return." Or, "conversation." The sense is, "he met with an end of his evil behaviour."

"Accused." Rather, "shut up."

9. "Lacedemonians." See 1 Macc. xii. 21.

II. MACCABEES, V.

15 Yet was he not content with this, but presumed to go into the most holy temple of all the world; Menelaus, that traitor to the laws, and to his own country, being his guide:

Before
CHRIST
cir. 170.

16 and taking the holy vessels with polluted hands, and with profane hands pulling down the things that were dedicated by other kings to the augmentation and glory and honour of the place, he gave them away.

17 And so haughty was Antiochus in mind, that he considered not that the Lord was angry for a while for the sins of them that dwelt in the city, and therefore his eye was not upon the place.

18 For had they not been formerly wrapped in many sins, this man, as soon as he had come, had forthwith been scourged, and put back from his presumption, ^b as Heliodorus was, whom Seleucus ^b ch. 3. 25, 26. the king sent to view the treasury.

19 Nevertheless God did not choose the people for the place's sake, but the place for the people's sake.

20 And therefore the place itself, that was partaker with them of the adversity that happened to the nation, did afterward communicate in the benefits sent from the Lord: and as it was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty, so again, the great Lord being reconciled, it was set up with all glory.

21 So when Antiochus had carried out of the temple a thousand and eight hundred talents, he departed in all haste unto Antiochia, weening in his pride to make the land navigable, and the sea passable by foot: such was the haughtiness of his mind.

22 And ^c he left governors to vex the nation: at ^c 1 Macc. i. 51. Jerusalem, Philip, for his country a Phrygian, and for manners more barbarous than he that set him there;

23 and at Garizim, Andronicus; and besides,

17. "His eye was not upon," &c. Rather, there was connivance (on God's part at the injury done) about the place.

23. "Garizim." Near Sichem (Deut. xi. 29.), where the Samaritan temple was (vi. 2.).

II. MACCABEES, VI.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 170.

cir. 168.
1 Macc. 1. 29.

Menelaus, who worse than all the rest bare an heavy hand over the citizens, having a malicious mind against his countrymen the Jews.

24 He sent also ^dthat detestable ringleader Apollonius with an army of two and twenty thousand, commanding him to slay all those that were in their best age, and to sell the women and the younger sort :

25 who coming to Jerusalem, and pretending peace, did forbear till the holy day of the sabbath, when taking the Jews keeping holy day, he commanded his men to arm themselves.

26 And so he slew all them that were gone to the celebrating of the sabbath, and running through the city with weapons slew great multitudes.

² Gr. who was
the tenth.
^c 1 Macc. 1. 53.
Heb. 11. 38.

27 But Judas Maccabeus ²with nine others, or thereabout, ^ewithdrew himself into the wilderness, and lived in the mountains after the manner of beasts, with his company, who fed on herbs continually, lest they should be partakers of the pollution.

CHAPTER VI.

¹ The Jews are compelled to leave the law of God. ⁴ The temple is defiled.
⁸ Cruelty upon the people and the women. ¹² An exhortation to bear affliction, by the example of the valiant courage of Eleazarus, cruelly tortured.

⁸ Antioch :
the Latin
interpreters.

NOT long after this the king sent an old man of ³Athens to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers, and not to live after the laws of God :

2 and to pollute also the temple in Jerusalem, and to call it the temple of Jupiter Olympius ; and that in Garizim, of Jupiter the Defender of strangers,
⁴ as they did desire that dwelt in the place.

⁴ Out of
Joseph. lib.
12. cap. 7.
or, as they
were.

3 The coming in of this mischief was sore and grievous to the people :

“His countrymen the Jews.” Against those who did not renounce their Jewish citizenship, as he had done (iv. 9.).

26. “To the celebrating of the sabbath.” Or, “those who went forth to the (military) review.” He pretended peace, and tempted them out of the city by the spectacle, and then slew them.

27. “Of the pollution.” By eating the unclean meats forced upon them by Antiochus (1 Macc. i. 62.).

II. MACCABEES, VI.

4 for the temple was filled with riot and revelling by the Gentiles, who dallied with harlots, and had to do with women within the circuit of the holy places, and besides that brought in things that were not lawful.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 168.

5 ^aThe altar also was filled with profane things, ^a1 Macc. 1.47. which the law forbiddeth.

6 Neither was it lawful for a man to keep sabbath days or ancient feasts, or to profess himself at all to be a Jew.

7 And in the day of the king's birth every month they were brought by bitter constraint to eat of the sacrifices; and when the feast of Bacchus was kept, the Jews were compelled to go in procession to Bacchus, carrying ivy.

8 Moreover there went out a decree to the neighbour cities of the ²heathen, by the suggestion of ²Gr. *Grecians*. Ptolemee, against the Jews, that they should observe the same fashions, and be partakers of their sacrifices:

9 and whoso would not conform themselves to the manners of the Gentiles should be put to death. Then might a man have seen the present misery.

10 For ^bthere were two women brought, who had ^b1 Macc. 1.60. circumcised their children; whom when they had openly led round about the city, the babes hanging at their breasts, they cast them down headlong from the wall.

11 And others, that had run together into caves near by, to keep the sabbath day secretly, being discovered to Philip, were all burnt together, because they made a conscience to help themselves for the honour of the most sacred day.

12 Now I beseech those that read this book, that they be not discouraged for these calamities, but that they judge those punishments not to be for destruction, but for a chastening of our nation.

13 For it is a token of his great goodness, when

CHAPTER VI.

7. "Ivy." Crowns of ivy, sacred to Bacchus, or Dionysus.

11. "Made a conscience to." Or, scrupled to.

II. MACCABEES, VI.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 168.

wicked doers are not suffered any long time, but forthwith punished.

14 For not as with other nations, whom the Lord patiently forbearcth to punish, till they be come to the fulness of their sins, so dealeth he with us,

15 lest that, being come to the height of sin, afterwards he should take vengeance of us.

16 And therefore he never withdraweth his mercy from us: and though he punish with adversity, yet doth he never forsake his people.

cir. 167.

17 But let this that we have spoken be for a warning unto us. And now will we come to the declaring of the matter in few words.

18 Eleazar, one of the principal scribes, an aged man, and of a well favoured countenance, was constrained to open his mouth, and to eat swine's flesh.

19 But he, choosing rather to die gloriously, than to live stained with such an abomination, spit it
c Heb. 11. 35. forth, and came of his own accord to the torment,

20 as it behoved them to come, that are resolute to stand out against such things, as are not lawful for love of life to be tasted.

21 But they that had the charge of that wicked feast, for the old acquaintance they had with the man, taking him aside, besought him to bring flesh of his own provision, such as was lawful for him to use, and make as if he did eat of the flesh taken from the sacrifice commanded by the king;

22 that in so doing he might be delivered from death, and for the old friendship with them find favour.

23 But he began to consider discreetly, and as became his age, and the excellency of his ancient years, and the honour of his gray head, whereunto

19. "To the torment." "Tympanum," in the original. A circular drum-like rack, on which the martyr was broken to death. Compare below, ver. 28. 4 Macc. v. 31; viii. 12. The cognate verb is used in Heb. xi. 35, where the Vulgate has "distenti sunt," and where the writer is referring to the Maccabæan martyrs, in his glorious catalogue of faithful saints and worthies. Compare below, on vii. 7, 14.

23. "The honour of his gray head." Literally, "his illustrious hoar hairs." The author uses the word "Epiphanes" here. The persecutor was called Epiphanes, but the martyr's hoary head *was* such.

II. MACCABEES, VI.

he was come, and his most honest education from a child, or rather the holy law made and given by God: therefore he answered accordingly, and willed them straightways to send him to the grave.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 167.

24 For it becometh not our age, *said he*, in any wise to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, being fourscore years old and ten, were now gone to a strange religion;

25 and so they through mine hypocrisy, and desire to live a little time and a moment longer, should be deceived by me, and I get a stain to mine old age, and make it abominable.

26 For though for the present time I should be delivered from the punishment of men: yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive, nor dead.

27 Wherefore now, manfully changing this life, I will shew myself such an one as mine age requireth,

28 and leave a notable example to such as be young to die willingly and courageously for the honourable and holy laws. And when he had said these words, immediately he went to the torment:

29 they that led him changing the good will they bare him a little before into hatred, because the foresaid speeches proceeded, as they thought, from ²a desperate mind.

²Or, madness,
or, pride.

30 But when he was ready to die with stripes, he groaned, and said, It is manifest unto the Lord, that hath the holy knowledge, that whereas I might have been delivered from death, I *now* endure sore pains in body by being beaten: but in soul am well content to suffer these things, because I fear him.

31 And thus this man died, leaving his death for an example of a noble courage, and a memorial of virtue, not only unto young men, but unto all his nation.

CHAPTER VII.

The constancy and cruel death of seven brethren and their mother in one day, because they would not eat swine's flesh at the king's commandment.

II. MACCABEES, VII.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 167.

IT came to pass also, that seven brethren with their mother were taken, and compelled by the king against the law to taste swine's flesh, and were tormented with scourges and whips.

2 But one of them that spake first said thus, What wouldest thou ask or learn of us? we are ready to die, rather than to transgress the laws of our fathers.

3 Then the king, being in a rage, commanded pans and caldrons to be made hot:

4 which forthwith being heated, he commanded to cut out the tongue of him that spake first, and to cut off the utmost parts of his body, the rest of his brethren and his mother looking on.

5 Now when he was thus maimed in all his members, he commanded him being yet alive to be brought to the fire, and to be fried in the pan: and as the vapour of the pan was for a good space dispersed, they exhorted one another with the mother to die manfully, saying thus,

6 The Lord God looketh upon us, and in truth hath comfort in us, as ^a Moses in his song, which witnessed to their faces, declared, saying, And he shall be comforted in his servants.

7 So when the first was dead after this manner, they brought the second to make him a mocking stock: and when they had pulled off the skin of his head with the hair, they asked him, Wilt thou eat, before thou be punished throughout every member of thy body?

8 But he answered in his own language, and said,

CHAPTER VII.

On this history, compare 4 Macc. v.—xii.

1. "Seven brethren with their mother." In Christian times St. Symphorosa with her *seven sons*, under the Emperor Adrian, and St. Felicitas with her *seven sons*, under Antoninus Pius, suffered martyrdom for Christ (Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum*, pp. 23—27.).

4. "To cut off." Or, having flayed them, to cut off.

7. "To make him a mocking stock." The word here used in the original is adopted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and is rendered "cruel mockings" (Heb. xi. 36.). Compare ver. 10, where the verb occurs; and above, vi. 19.

II. MACCABEES, VII.

No. Wherefore he also received the next torment in order, as the former did.

9 And when he was at the last gasp, he said, Thou like a fury takest us out of this present life, but the King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life.

10 After him was the third made a mocking stock: and when he was required, he put out his tongue, and that right soon, holding forth his hands manfully,

11 and said courageously, These I had from heaven; and for his laws I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again.

12 Insomuch that the king, and they that were with him, marvelled at the young man's courage, for that he nothing regarded the pains.

13 Now when this man was dead also, they tormented and mangled the fourth in like manner.

14 So when he was ready to die he said thus, It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life.

15 Afterward they brought the fifth also, and mangled him.

16 Then looked he unto the king, and said, Thou hast power over men, thou art corruptible, thou doest what thou wilt; yet think not that our nation is forsaken of God;

17 but abide a while, and behold his great power, how he will torment thee and thy seed.

18 After him also they brought the sixth, who being ready to die said, Be not deceived without cause: for we suffer these things for ourselves, having sinned against our God: therefore marvellous things are done *unto us*.

19 But think not thou, that takest in hand to strive against God, that thou shalt escape unpunished.

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9. "Will raise us up . . . unto everlasting life." Literally, "will raise us up to an eternal resurrection to life." Compare vv. 14, 23. See again the reference to Heb. xi. 35. The hope of resurrection was produced by such scriptures as Dan. xii. 1, 2, 13. Ezek. xxxvii. 1-6. Isa. xxvi. 19. Job xix. 25, 26.

II. MACCABEES, VII.

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20 But the mother was marvellous above all, and worthy of honourable memory: for when she saw her seven sons slain within the space of one day, she bare it with a good courage, because of the hope that she had in the Lord.

21 Yea, she exhorted every one of them in her own language, filled with courageous spirits; and stirring up her womanish thoughts with a manly stomach, she said unto them,

22 I cannot tell how ye came into my womb; for I neither gave you breath nor life, neither was it I that formed the members of every one of you;

23 but doubtless the Creator of the world, who formed the generation of man, and found out the beginning of all things, will also of his own mercy give you breath and life again, as ye now regard not your own selves for his laws' sake.

24 Now Antiochus, thinking himself despised, and suspecting it to be a reproachful speech, whilst the youngest was yet alive, did not only exhort him by words, but also assured him with oaths, that he would make him both a rich and a happy man, if he would turn from the laws of his fathers; and that also he would take him for his friend, and trust him with affairs.

25 But when the young man would in no case hearken unto him, the king called his mother, and exhorted her that she would counsel the young man to save his life.

26 And when he had exhorted her with many words, she promised him that she would counsel her son.

27 But she bowing herself toward him, laughing the cruel tyrant to scorn, spake in her country language on this manner; O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee suck three years, and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age, and endured the troubles of education.

22. "The members." The elementary organization.

27. "Three years." Compare Gen. iii. 8. Exod. ii. 9. 1 Sam. i. 24.

II. MACCABEES, VII.

28 I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that ^b God made them of things that were not; and so was mankind made likewise.

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cir 167.

^b Rom. 4. 17.

29 Fear not this tormentor, but, being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren.

30 Whiles she was yet speaking these words, the young man said, Whom wait ye for? I will not obey the king's commandment: but I will obey the commandment of the law that was given unto our fathers by Moses.

31 And thou, that hast been the author of all mischief against the Hebrews, shalt not escape the hands of God.

32 For we suffer because of our sins.

33 And though the living Lord be angry with us a little while for our chastening and correction, yet shall he be at one again with his servants.

34 But thou, O godless man, and of all other most wicked, be not lifted up without a cause, nor puffed up with uncertain hopes, lifting up thy hand against the servants of God:

35 for thou hast not yet escaped the judgment of Almighty God, who seeth all things.

36 For our brethren, who now have suffered a short pain, are dead under God's covenant of everlasting life: but thou, through the judgment of God, shalt receive just punishment for thy pride.

37 But I, as my brethren, offer up my body and life for the laws of our fathers, beseeching God that he would speedily be merciful unto our nation; and that ^c thou by torments and plagues mayest confess, that he alone is God;

^c 1 Macc. 6. 13.
ch. 9. 12, &c.

38 and that in me and my brethren the wrath of the Almighty, which is justly brought upon all our nation, may cease.

39 Then the king, being in a rage, handled him

36. "I scarce know where to find an instance of greater faith" (in the resurrection and immortality,) "and fortitude in any of our "Christian martyrologies than here" (Bishop Bull, *Sermon VIII.*, p. 203.).

II. MACCABEES, VIII.

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cir. 167.

worse than all the rest, and took it grievously that he was mocked.

40 So this man died undefiled, and put his whole trust in the Lord.

41 Last of all after the sons the mother died.

42 Let this be enough now to have spoken concerning the idolatrous feasts, and the extreme tortures.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 Judas gathereth an host. 9 Nicanor is sent against him: who presumeth to make much money of his prisoners. 16 Judas encourageth his men, and putteth Nicanor to flight, 28 and divideth the spoils. 30 Other enemies are also defeated, 35 and Nicanor fleeth with grief to Antioch.

cir. 166.

THEN Judas Maccabeus, and they that were with him, went privily into the towns, and called their kinsfolks together, and took unto them all such as continued in the Jews' religion, and assembled about six thousand men.

2 And they called upon the Lord, that he would look upon the people that was trodden down of all; and also pity the temple profaned of ungodly men;

3 and that he would have compassion upon the city, sore defaced, and ready to be made even with the ground; and hear the blood that cried unto him,

4 and remember the wicked slaughter of harmless infants, and the blasphemies committed against his name; and that he would shew his hatred against the wicked.

5 Now when Maccabeus had his company about him, he could not be withstood by the heathen: for the wrath of the Lord was turned into mercy.

6 Therefore he came at unawares, and burnt up towns and cities, and got into his hands the most commodious places, and overcame and put to flight no small number of his enemies.

7 But specially took he advantage of the night for such privy attempts, insomuch that the bruit of his manliness was spread every where.

CHAPTER VIII.

5. "Had his company about him;" i.e. was at the head of his army.

II. MACCABEES, VIII.

8 So when Philip saw that this man increased by little and little, and that things prospered with him still more and more, he wrote unto Ptolemeus, the governor of Celosyria and Phenice, to yield more aid to the king's affairs.

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CHRIST
cir. 166.

9 Then forthwith choosing Nicanor the son of Patroclus, one of his special friends, he sent him with no fewer than twenty thousand of all nations under him, to root out the whole generation of the Jews; and with him he joined also Gorgias a captain, who in matters of war had great experience.

10 So Nicanor undertook to make so much money of ^athe captive Jews, as should defray the tribute of two thousand talents, which the king was to pay to the Romans.

^a 1 Macc. 3. 41.
ver. 25, 34.

11 Wherefore immediately he sent to the cities upon the sea coast, proclaiming a sale of the captive Jews, and promising that they should have fourscore and ten bodies for one talent, not expecting the vengeance that was to follow upon him from the Almighty God.

12 Now when word was brought unto Judas of Nicanor's coming, and he had imparted unto those that were with him that the army was at hand,

13 ^bthey that were fearful, and distrusted the justice of God, fled, and conveyed themselves away.

^b 1 Macc. 3. 56.

14 Others sold all that they had left, and withal besought the Lord to deliver them, being sold by the wicked Nicanor before they met together:

15 and if not for their own sakes, yet for the covenants he had made with their fathers, and for his holy and glorious name's sake, by which they were called.

16 So Maccabeus called his men together unto the number of six thousand, and exhorted them ^cnot to be stricken with terror of the enemy, nor to fear the great multitude of the heathen, who came wrongfully against them; but to fight manfully,

^c 1 Macc. 4. 8.

17 and to set before their eyes the injury that

8. "Philip;" v. 22.

9. "Nicanor;" 1 Macc. iii. 38; vii. 26, 27, 44.

"Gorgias;" 1 Macc. iii. 38; iv. 5, 18; v. 59.

II. MACCABEES, VIII.

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they had unjustly done to the holy place, and the cruel handling of the city, whereof they made a mockery, and also the taking away of the government of their forefathers :

18 for they, said he, trust in their weapons and boldness ; but our confidence is in the Almighty God, who at a beck can cast down both them that come against us, and also all the world.

^d 1 Macc. 7.
41.
ch. 15. 22.

19 Moreover he recounted unto them what helps their forefathers had found, and ^d how they were delivered, when under Sennacherib an hundred fourscore and five thousand perished.

20 And he told them of the battle that they had in Babylon with the Galatians, how they came but eight thousand in all to the business, with four thousand Macedonians, and that the Macedonians being perplexed, the eight thousand destroyed an hundred and twenty thousand because of the help that they had from heaven, and so received a great booty.

21 Thus when he had made them bold with these words, and ready to die for the laws and the country, he divided his army into four parts ;

22 and joined with himself his own brethren, leaders of each band, *to wit*, Simon, and Joseph, and Jonathan, giving each one fifteen hundred men.

23 Also *he appointed* Eleazar to read the holy book : and when he had given them this watch-word, The help of God ; himself leading the first band, he joined battle with Nicanor.

24 And by the help of the Almighty they slew above nine thousand of their enemies, and wounded and maimed the most part of Nicanor's host, and so put all to flight ;

^e ver. 10, 11,
34.

25 and took ^e their money that came to buy them, and pursued them far : but lacking time they returned :

26 for it was the day before the sabbath, and therefore they would no longer pursue them.

20. "They had;" i.e. the Jews had.

"Galatians." Whose warlike prowess is celebrated by Justin (xxv. 2.).

"Macedonians." Syrian Greeks.

II. MACCABEES, VIII.

27 So when they had gathered ²their armour together, and spoiled their enemies, they occupied themselves about the sabbath, yielding exceeding praise and thanks to the Lord, who had preserved them unto that day, which was the beginning of mercy distilling upon them.

Before
CHRIST
cir. 166.

² That is,
the enemies'
armour.

28 And after the sabbath, when they had given part of the spoils to the ³maimed, and the widows, and orphans, the residue they divided among themselves and their servants.

³ Or, lamed
with tor-
tures.

29 When this was done, and they had made a common supplication, they besought the merciful Lord to be reconciled with his servants for ever.

30 Moreover of those that were with Timotheus and Bacchides, who fought against them, they slew above twenty thousand, and very easily got high and strong holds, and divided among themselves many spoils more, and made the ⁴maimed, orphans, widows, yea, and the aged also, equal in spoils with themselves.

⁴ Or, lamed.

31 And when they had gathered their armour together, they laid them up all carefully in convenient places, and the remnant of the spoils they brought to Jerusalem.

32 They slew also Philarches, that wicked person, who was with Timotheus, and had annoyed the Jews many ways.

33 Furthermore at such time as they kept the feast for the victory in their country they burnt Callisthenes, that had set fire upon the holy gates, who had fled into a little house; and so he received a reward meet for his wickedness.

34 As for that most ungracious Nicanor, who had brought a thousand merchants ^fto buy the Jews,

^f ver. 25.

35 he was through the help of the Lord brought down by them, of whom he made least account; and putting off his glorious apparel, and discharging his company, he came like a fugitive servant

30. "Timotheus;" 1 Macc. v. 6., &c.

"Bacchides;" 1 Macc. vii. 8.

34. "Most ungracious." Thrice wicked wretch.

II. MACCABEES, IX.

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g ver. 10.

through the midland unto Antioch, having very great dishonour, for that his host was destroyed.

36 Thus he, that ^gtook upon him to make good to the Romans their tribute by means of the captives in Jerusalem, told abroad, that the Jews had God to fight for them, and therefore they could not be hurt, because they followed the laws that he gave them.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *Antiochus is chased from Persepolis. 5 He is stricken with a sore disease, 14 and promiseth to become a Jew. 28 He dieth miserably.*

cir. 164.

² Or,
disorderly.

^a 1 Macc. 6.
1. &c.

ABOUT that time came Antiochus ²with dishonour ^aout of the country of Persia.

2 For he had entered the *city* called Persepolis, and went about to rob the temple, and to hold the city; whereupon the multitude running to defend themselves with their weapons put them to flight; and so it happened, that Antiochus being put to flight of the inhabitants returned with shame.

3 Now when he came to Ecbatane, news was brought him what had happened unto Nicanor and Timotheus.

4 Then swelling with anger, he thought to avenge upon the Jews the disgrace done unto him by those that made him flee. Therefore commanded he his chariotman to drive without ceasing, and to dispatch the journey, the judgment of God now following him. For he had spoken proudly in this sort, That he would come to Jerusalem, and make it a common buryingplace of the Jews.

5 But the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, smote him with an incurable and invisible plague:

CHAPTER IX.

Death of Antiochus Epiphanes.

On the differences between this account and that in i. 13—16, see *Note* there, and compare 1 Macc. vi.

2. "Persepolis." The capital of Media. It is not easy to see how he could have passed by Ecbatana toward Babylon from Persia: is there a confusion between it and Susa?

3. "Nicanor and Timotheus;" viii. 23, 30.

II. MACCABEES, IX.

for as soon as he had spoken these words, ^ba pain of the bowels that was remediless came upon him, and sore torments of the inner parts ;

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6 and that most justly : for he had tormented other men's bowels with many and strange torments.

^b 1 Macc. 6. 8,
9, 13.

7 Howbeit he nothing at all ceased from his bragging, but still was filled with pride, breathing out fire in his rage against the Jews, and commanding to haste the journey : but it came to pass that he fell down from his chariot, carried violently ; so that having a sore fall, all the members of his body were much pained.

8 And thus he that a little afore thought he might command the waves of the sea, (so proud was he beyond the condition of man) and weigh the high mountains in a balance, was now cast on the ground, and carried in an horselitter, shewing forth unto all the manifest power of God.

9 So that ^cthe worms rose up out of the body of this wicked man, and whiles he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell away, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to all his army.

^c Acts 12. 23.

10 And the man, that thought a little afore he could reach to the stars of heaven, no man could endure to carry for his intolerable stink.

11 Here therefore, being plagued, he began to leave off his great pride, and to come to the knowledge of *himself* by the scourge of God, his pain increasing every moment.

12 And when he himself could not abide his own smell, he said these words, It is meet to be subject unto God, and that a man that is mortal should not proudly think of himself, as if he were God.

13 This wicked person vowed also unto the Lord, who now no more would have mercy upon him, saying thus,

14 That the holy city (to the which he was going in haste, to lay it even with the ground, and to

7. "He fell down from his chariot." The horses being frightened by some elephants, according to the account in the Arabic Book of the Maccabees, and in Josephus Gorionides.

II. MACCABEES, IX.

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make it a common buryingplace,) he would set at liberty:

² Or, *Antioch.*

15 and as touching the Jews, whom he had judged not worthy so much as to be buried, but to be cast out with their children to be devoured of the fowls and wild beasts, he would make them all equals to the citizens of ²Athens:

^d So Ezra 6. 9.
¹ Macc. 10.
39, 40.

16 and the holy temple, which before he had spoiled, he would garnish with goodly gifts, and restore all the holy vessels with many more, and ^dout of his own revenue defray the charges belonging to the sacrifices:

17 yea, and that also he would become a Jew himself, and go through all the world that was inhabited, and declare the power of God.

18 But for all this his pains would not cease: for the just judgment of God was come upon him: therefore despairing of his health, he wrote unto the Jews the letter underwritten, containing the form of a supplication, after this manner:

19 Antiochus, king and governor, to the good Jews his citizens wisheth much joy, health, and prosperity:

20 If ye and your children fare well, and your affairs be to your contentment, I give very great thanks to God, having my hope in heaven.

21 As for me, I was weak, or else I would have remembered kindly your honour and good will. Returning out of Persia, and being taken with a grievous disease, I thought it necessary to care for the common safety of all:

22 not distrusting mine health, but having great hope to escape this sickness.

23 But considering that even my father, at what time he led an army into the high countries, appointed a successor,

24 to the end that, if any thing fell out contrary to expectation, or if any tidings were brought that

15. "Equals to the citizens of Athens." That is, free from monarchical rule, as republicans.

19. "Antiochus." He was an imitator of Roman usages (having lived long at Rome), and this epistle appears to be conceived and expressed as a Roman formulary.

II. MACCABEES, X:

were grievous, they of the land, knowing to whom¹ the state was left, might not be troubled:

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25 again, considering how that the princes that are borderers and neighbours unto my kingdom wait for opportunities, and expect what shall be the event, I have appointed my son Antiochus king, whom I often committed and commended unto many of you, when I went up into the high provinces; to whom I have written as followeth:

² Or, common
affairs.

26 Therefore I pray and request you to remember the benefits that I have done unto you generally, and in special, and that every man will be still faithful to me and my son.

27 For I am persuaded that he³ understanding my mind will favourably and graciously yield to your desires.

³ Or,
following.

28 Thus the murderer and blasphemer having suffered most grievously, as he entreated other men, so died he a miserable death in a strange country in the mountains.

29 And Philip, that was brought up with him, carried away his body, who also fearing the son of Antiochus went into Egypt to Ptolemeus Philometor.

CHAPTER X.

¹ Judas recovereth the city, and purifieth the temple. ¹⁴ Gorgias vexeth the Jews. ¹⁶ Judas winneth their holds. ²⁹ Timotheus and his men are discomfited. ³⁵ Gazara is taken, and Timotheus slain.

NOW Maccabeus and his company, the Lord guiding them, recovered the temple and the city:

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2 but the altars which the heathen had built in the open street, and also the chapels, they pulled down.

3 And having cleansed the temple^a they made^a another altar, and striking stones they took fire

^a 1 Macc. 4.47.

29. "Philip;" 1 Macc. vi. 14. Afterwards killed by Lysias, according to Josephus.

"His body." There is a tradition (in a fragment of *Licinianus*) that it was lost in a river.

CHAPTER X.

On the Purifying the Temple.

See 1 Macc. iv. 31—54.

3. "Fire." See above, on i. 18.

II. MACCABEES, X.

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out of them, and offered a sacrifice after two years, and set forth incense, and lights, and shewbread.

4 When that was done, they fell flat down, and besought the Lord that they might come no more into such troubles; but if they sinned any more against him, that he himself would chasten them with mercy, and that they might not be delivered unto the blasphemous and barbarous nations.

^b 1 Macc. 4.
52, 54.

5 Now ^b upon the same day that the strangers profaned the temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Casleu.

^c 1 Macc. 4 56.

6 ^c And they kept eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts.

7 Therefore they bare branches, and fair boughs, and palms also, and sang psalms unto him that had given them good success in cleansing his place.

^d 1 Macc. 4. 59.

8 ^d They ordained also by a common statute and decree, That every year those days should be kept of the whole nation of the Jews.

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beginning.

9 And this was the end of Antiochus, called Epiphanes.

10 Now will we declare the acts of Antiochus Eupator, who was the son of this wicked man, gathering briefly the calamities of the wars.

11 So when he was come to the crown, he set one Lysias over the affairs of his realm, and *appointed him* chief governor of Celosyria and Phenice.

12 For Ptolemeus, that was called Macron, choosing rather to do justice unto the Jews for the wrong that had been done unto them, endeavoured to continue peace with them.

"After two years." According to 1 Macc. iv. 54, the desolation of the Temple lasted three years; as in a MS. here mentioned by Grotius.

6. "In the mountains and dens." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews appears to refer to this also (Heb. xi. 38.).

10. "The calamities." The continuous calamities.

12. "Macron;" iv. 45; viii. 8.

II. MACCABEES, X.

13 Whereupon being accused of *the king's* friends before Eupator, and called traitor at every word, because he had left Cyprus, that Philometor had committed unto him, and departed to Antiochus Epiphanes, ² and seeing that he was in no honourable place, he was so discouraged, that he poisoned himself and died.

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14 But when Gorgias was governor of the ³ holds, he hired soldiers, and nourished war continually with the Jews :

² Or, and not bearing his authority as becometh a nobleman.

³ Or, strong places.

15 and therewithal the Idumeans, having gotten into their hands the most commodious holds, kept the Jews occupied, and receiving those that were banished from Jerusalem, they went about to nourish war.

16 Then they that were with Maccabeus made supplication, and besought God that he would be their helper ; and so they ran with violence upon the strong holds of the Idumeans,

17 and assaulting them strongly, they won the holds, and kept off all that fought upon the wall, and slew all that fell into their hands, and killed no fewer than twenty thousand.

18 And because certain, who were no less than nine thousand, were fled together into two very strong castles, having all manner of things convenient to *sustain* the siege,

19 Maccabeus left Simon and Joseph, and Zacheus also, and them that were with him, who were enough to besiege them, and departed himself unto those places which more needed his help.

20 Now ⁴ they that were with Simon, being led with covetousness, were persuaded for money through certain of those that were in the castle, and took seventy thousand drachms, and let some of them escape.

⁴ Or, Simon.

21 But when it was told Maccabeus what was done, he called the governors of the people together, and accused those men, that they had sold their brethren for money, and set their enemies free to fight against them.

II. MACCABEES, X.

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22 So he slew those that were found traitors, and immediately took the two castles.

23 And having good success with his weapons in all things he took in hand, he slew in the two holds more than twenty thousand.

^e 1 Macc. 5.
6, 7.

24 Now Timotheus, ^ewhom the Jews had overcome before, when he had gathered a great multitude of foreign forces, and horses out of Asia not a few, came as though he would take Jewry by force of arms.

² Or,
Maccabeus,
and they
that were
with him.

25 But when he drew near, ²they that were with Maccabeus turned themselves to pray unto God, and sprinkled earth upon their heads, and girded their loins with sackcloth,

^f Ex. 23. 22.
Deut. 28. 7.

26 and fell down at the foot of the altar, and besought him to be merciful to them, and to be ^fan enemy to their enemies, and an adversary to their adversaries, as the law declareth.

27 So after the prayer they took their weapons, and went on further from the city: and when they drew near to their enemies, they kept by themselves.

³ Or,
warrant,
or, surely.

28 Now the sun being newly risen, they joined both together; the one part having together with their virtue their refuge also unto the Lord for a ³pledge of their success and victory: the other side making their rage leader of their battle.

^g See ch. 2. 21.

29 But when the battle waxed strong, ^gthere appeared unto the enemies from heaven five comely men upon horses, with bridles of gold, and two of them led the Jews,

30 and took Maccabeus betwixt them, and covered him on every side with their weapons, and kept him safe, but shot arrows and lightnings against the enemies: so that being confounded with blindness, and full of trouble, they were killed.

31 And there were slain *of footmen* twenty thousand and five hundred, and six hundred horsemen

32 As for Timotheus himself, he fled into a very

29. "And two." Literally, "and the two" (of the foe) took Maccabeus, &c.; but the text seems corrupt.

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strong hold, called Gazara, where Chereas was governor.

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33 But they that were with Maccabeus laid siege against the fortress courageously four days.

34 And they that were within, trusting to the strength of the place, blasphemed exceedingly, and uttered wicked words.

35 Nevertheless upon the fifth day early twenty young men of Maccabeus' company, inflamed with anger because of the blasphemies, assaulted the wall manly, and with a fierce courage killed all that they met withal.

36 Others likewise ascending after them, whiles they were busied with them that were within, burnt the towers, and kindling fires burnt the blasphemers alive; and others broke open the gates, and, having received in the rest of the army, took the city,

37 and killed Timotheus, that was hid in a certain pit, and Chereas his brother, with Apolophanes.

38 When this was done, they praised the Lord with psalms and thanksgiving, who had done so great things for Israel, and given them the victory.

CHAPTER XI.

3 *Lysias, thinking to get Jerusalem, 8 is put to flight. 16 The letters of Lysias to the Jews: 22 of the king unto Lysias, 27 and to the Jews: 34 of the Romans to the Jews.*

NOT long after this, Lysias the king's ²protector ²Gr. tutor. and cousin, who also managed the affairs, took sore displeasure for the things that were done.

2 ^aAnd when he had gathered about fourscore ^a1 Macc. 4. thousand with all the horsemen, he came against the Jews, thinking to make the city an habitation of the ³Gentiles, ^{28.}

3 and to make a gain of the temple, as of the other chapels of the heathen, and to set the high priesthood to sale every year:

³ Or,
Grecians.

CHAPTER XI.

On this victory, compare 1 Macc. iv. 26—35.

1. "The king's." Antiochus Eupator, son of Antiochus Epiphanes.
3. "Make a gain of." Rather, make it tributary.

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4 not at all considering the power of God, but puffed up with his ten thousands of footmen, and his thousands of horsemen, and his fourscore elephants.

5 So he came to Judea, and drew near to Bethsura, which was a strong town, but distant from Jerusalem about five furlongs, and he laid sore siege unto it.

² Maccabeus
and his
company.

6 Now when ²they that were with Maccabeus heard that he besieged the holds, they and all the people with lamentation and tears besought the Lord that he would send a good angel to deliver Israel.

7 Then Maccabeus himself first of all took weapons, exhorting the other that they would jeopard themselves together with him to help their brethren: so they went forth together with a willing mind.

^b ch. 2. 21.
& 10. 29.

8 And as they were at Jerusalem, ^bthere appeared before them on horseback one in white clothing, shaking his armour of gold.

9 Then they praised the merciful God all together, and took heart, insomuch that they were ready not only to fight with men, but with most cruel beasts, and to pierce through walls of iron.

10 Thus they marched forward in their armour, having an helper from heaven: for the Lord was merciful unto them.

11 And giving a charge upon their enemies like lions, they slew eleven thousand *footmen*, and sixteen hundred horsemen, and put all the other to flight.

12 Many of them also being wounded escaped naked; and Lysias himself fled away shamefully, and so escaped.

13 Who, as he was a man of understanding, casting with himself what loss he had had, and considering that the Hebrews could not be overcome, because the Almighty God helped them, he sent unto them,

12. "Naked." Without armour.

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14 and persuaded them to agree to all reasonable *conditions*, and *promised* ° that he would persuade the king that he must needs be a friend unto them.

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15 Then Maccabeus consented to all that Lysias desired, being careful of the common good; and whatsoever Maccabeus wrote unto Lysias concerning the Jews, the king granted it.

c 1 Macc. 6.
58, 59, 60.

16 For there were letters written unto the Jews from Lysias to this effect: Lysias unto the people of the Jews *sendeth* greeting:

17 John and Absalon, who were sent from you, delivered me the petition subscribed, and made request for the performance of the contents thereof.

18 Therefore what things soever were meet to be reported to the king, I have declared them, and he hath granted as much as might be.

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19 If then ye will keep yourselves loyal to the state, hereafter also will I endeavour to be a means of your good.

20 But of the particulars I have given order both to these, and the other that came from me, to commune with you.

21 Fare ye well. The hundred and eight and fortieth year, the four and twentieth day of *the month* ² Dioscorinthius.

² Or,
Dioscorus.

22 Now the king's letter contained these words: King Antiochus unto his brother Lysias *sendeth* greeting:

23 Since our father is translated unto the gods, our will is, that they that are in our realm live quietly, that every one may attend upon his own affairs.

24 We understand also that the Jews would not consent to our father, for to be brought unto the custom of the Gentiles, but had rather keep their own manner of living: for the which cause they require of us, that we should suffer them to live after their own laws.

17. "Petition." Document, or memorial.

21. "The hundred and eight and fortieth year." B.C. 165---164.

"Dioscorinthius." Probably the Macedonian month "Dius," November.

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25 Wherefore our mind is, that this nation shall be in rest, and we have determined to restore them their temple, that they may live according to the customs of their forefathers.

² Or,
give them
assurance.

26 Thou shalt do well therefore to send unto them, and ²grant them peace, that when they are certified of our mind, they may be of good comfort, and ever go cheerfully about their own affairs.

27 And the letter of the king unto the nation of the Jews was after this manner: King Antiochus *sendeth* greeting unto the council, and the rest of the Jews:

28 If ye fare well, we have our desire; we are also in good health.

29 Menelaus declared unto us, that your desire was to return home, and to follow your own business:

30 wherefore they that will depart shall have safe conduct till the thirtieth day of Xanthicus with security.

31 And the Jews shall use their own kind of meats and laws, as before; and none of them any manner of ways shall be molested for things ignorantly done.

32 I have sent also Menelaus, that he may comfort you.

³ Or, April.

33 Fare ye well. In the hundred forty and eighth year, *and* the fifteenth day of *the month* ³Xanthicus.

⁴ Or, consuls.

34 The Romans also sent unto them a letter containing these words: Quintus Memmius and Titus Manlius, ⁴ambassadors of the Romans, *send* greeting unto the people of the Jews.

35 Whatsoever Lysias the king's cousin hath granted, therewith we also are well pleased.

36 But touching such things as he judged to be referred to the king, after ye have advised thereof, send one forthwith, that we may declare as it

33. "Xanthicus." April. There is some difficulty as to the *dates* of the year of these letters (see *Keil*), which seem to refer to the peace concluded after the *second* war with Lysias (1 Macc. vi. 42—62.).

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is convenient for you: for we are now going to Antioch.

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37 Therefore send some with speed, that we may know what is your mind.

38 Farewell. This hundred and eight and fortieth year, the fifteenth day of *the month Xanthicus*.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *The king's lieutenants vex the Jews.* 3 *They of Joppe drown two hundred Jews.* 6 *Judas is avenged upon them.* 11 *He maketh peace with the Arabians,* 16 *and taketh Caspis.* 22 *Timotheus' armies overthrown.*

WHEN these covenants were made, Lysias went unto the king, and the Jews were about their husbandry.

2 But of the governors of several places, ^a Timotheus, and Apollonius the son of Genneus, also Hieronymus, and Demophon, and beside them Nicanor the governor of Cyprus, would not suffer them to be quiet, and live in peace.

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^a See ch. 10.
37.

3 The men of Joppe also did such an ungodly deed: they prayed the Jews that dwelt among them to go with their wives and children into the boats which they had prepared, as though they had meant them no hurt.

4 Who accepted of it according to the common decree of the city, as being desirous to live in peace, and suspecting nothing: but when they were gone forth into the deep, they drowned no less than two hundred of them.

5 When Judas heard of this cruelty done unto his countrymen, he commanded those that were with him *to make them ready*.

6 And calling upon God the righteous Judge, he came against those murderers of his brethren, and burnt the haven by night, and set the boats on fire, and those that fled thither he slew.

7 And when the town was shut up, he went back-

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2. "Timotheus." See viii. 30; x. 24—37.

"Apollonius the son of Genneus." Thus distinguished from Apollonius son of Thraseas (iii. 5, 7.), and the son of Menestheus (iv. 21.).

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² Or, with
a purpose
to return.

ward, ² as if he would return to root out all them of the city of Joppe.

8 But when he heard that the Jamnites were minded to do in like manner unto the Jews that dwelt among them,

9 he came upon the Jamnites also by night, and set fire on the haven and the navy, so that the light of the fire was seen at Jerusalem two hundred and forty furlongs off.

10 Now when they were gone from thence nine furlongs in their journey toward Timotheus, no fewer than five thousand *men on foot* and five hundred horsemen of the Arabians set upon him.

11 Whereupon there was a very sore battle; but Judas' side by the help of God got the victory; so that the Nomades of Arabia, being overcome, besought Judas for peace, promising both to give him cattle, and to pleasure him otherwise.

12 Then Judas, thinking indeed that they would be profitable in many things, granted them peace: whereupon they shook hands, and so they ³ departed to their tents.

³ Or, went
from place
to place
with their
families
and cattle.

13 He went also about to make a bridge to a certain strong city, which was fenced about with walls, and inhabited by people of divers countries; and the name of it was Caspis.

14 But they that were within it put such trust in the strength of the walls and provision of victuals, that they behaved themselves rudely toward them that were with Judas, railing and blaspheming, and uttering such words as were not to be spoken.

15 Wherefore Judas with his company, calling upon the great Lord of the world, ^b who without any rams or engines of war did cast down Jericho in the time of Joshua, gave a fierce assault against the walls,

16 and took the city by the will of God, and made unspeakable slaughters, insomuch that a lake two

8. "Jamnites." Near Joppa (1 Macc. iv. 15.).

13. "Caspis." See 1 Macc. v. 26, 36. On the East of the Sea of Galilee.

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furlongs broad near adjoining thereunto, being filled full, was seen running with blood.

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17 Then departed they from thence seven hundred and fifty furlongs, and came to Characa unto the Jews that are called Tubieni.

18 But as for Timotheus, they found him not in the places: for before he had dispatched any thing, he departed from thence, having left a very strong garrison in a certain hold.

19 Howbeit Dositheus and Sosipater, who were of Maccabeus' captains, went forth, and slew those that Timotheus had left in the fortress, above ten thousand men.

20 And Maccabeus ranged his army by bands, and set ²them over the bands, and went against Timotheus, who had about him an hundred and twenty thousand men of foot, and two thousand and five hundred horsemen.

² *Dositheus
and Sospater.*

21 Now when Timotheus had knowledge of Judas' coming, he sent the women and children and the other baggage unto a fortress called ^cCarnion: for the town was hard to besiege, and uneasy to come unto, by reason of the straitness of all the places.

^c 1 Macc. 5.
43,
Carnaim.

22 But when Judas his first band came in sight, the enemies, being smitten with fear and terror through the appearing of him that seeth all things, fled amain, one running this way, another that way, so as that they were often hurt of their own men, and wounded with the points of their own swords.

23 Judas also was very earnest in pursuing them, killing those wicked wretches, of whom he slew about thirty thousand men.

24 Moreover Timotheus himself fell into the hands of Dositheus and Sosipater, whom he besought with much craft to let him go with his life, because he had many of the Jews' parents, and the brethren of some of them, who, if they put him to death, should not be regarded.

17. "Characa." Or, "the palisaded fort."

"Tubieni." Between Anmonitis and Syria. See 1 Macc. v. 13. On this expedition, compare 1 Macc. v. 24--36.

21. "Carnion." See 1 Macc. v. 2, 43.

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25 So when he had assured them with many words that he would restore them without hurt, according to the agreement, they let him go for the saving of their brethren.

² That is,
Venus.

26 Then Maccabeus marched forth to Carnion, and to the temple of ²Atargatis, and there he slew five and twenty thousand persons.

27 And after he had put to flight and destroyed them, Judas removed the host toward Ephron, a strong city, wherein Lysias abode, and a great multitude of divers nations, and the strong young men kept the walls, and defended them mightily: wherein also was great provision of engines and darts.

28 But when Judas and his company had called upon Almighty God, who with his power breaketh the strength of his enemies, they won the city, and slew twenty and five thousand of them that were within.

29 From thence they departed to Scythopolis, which lieth six hundred furlongs from Jerusalem.

30 But when the Jews that dwelt there had testified that the Scythopolitans dealt lovingly with them, and entreated them kindly in the time of their adversity;

31 they gave them thanks, desiring them to be friendly still unto them: and so they came to Jerusalem, the feast of the weeks approaching.

³ Or, *Jamnia*,
1 Macc. 5. 58.

32 And after the *feast*, called Pentecost, they went forth against Gorgias the governor of ³Idumea,

33 who came out with three thousand men of foot and four hundred horsemen.

34 And it happened that in their fighting together a few of the Jews were slain.

35 At which time Dositheus, one of Bacenor's company, who was on horseback, and a strong man, was still upon Gorgias, and taking hold of

26. "Atargatis." Or Derketo, the female Babylonian, Syrian, and Philistian fish-like deity.

27. "Ephron." See 1 Macc. v. 46.

29. "Scythopolis." 1 Macc. v. 52.

32. "Idumea." 1 Macc. v. 55—61.

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his coat drew him by force; and when he would have taken that cursed man alive, a horseman of Thracia coming upon him ² smote off his shoulder, so that Gorgias fled unto Marisa.

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² Or, put by
his arm:
or, wounded
him in the
shoulder:
or, struck
him in the
shoulder.

³ Or, Esdras.

36 Now when they that were with ³ Gorgias had fought long, and were weary, Judas called upon the Lord, that he would shew himself to be their helper and leader of the battle.

37 And with that he began in his own language, and sung psalms with a loud voice, and rushing unawares upon Gorgias' men, he put them to flight.

38 So Judas gathered his host, and came into the city of Odollam. And when the seventh day came, they purified themselves, as the custom was, and kept the sabbath in the same place.

39 And upon the day following, ⁴ as the use had been, Judas and his company came to take up the bodies of them that were slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen in their fathers' graves.

⁴ Or, at such
time, &c.

40 Now under the coats of every one that was slain they found things consecrated to the idols of the Jamnites, which is forbidden the Jews by ^d the law. Then every man saw that this was the cause wherefore they were slain.

^d Deut. 7. 25,
26.

41 All men therefore praising the Lord, the righteous Judge, who had opened the things that were hid,

42 betook themselves unto prayer, and besought him that the sin committed might wholly be put out of remembrance. Besides, that noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forsomuch as they saw before their eyes the things that came to pass for the sins of those that were slain.

43 And when he had made a gathering throughout

35. "Marisa." 1 Macc. v. 66.

36. "Gorgias." Rather (as in some MSS.), Esdras.

38. "Odollam." In the lowland of Judah (Josh. xv. 35.).

40. "Things consecrated," and worn by them as amulets.

43. "Throughout the company." "Man by man."

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the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection :

44 for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.

45 And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 Eupator invadeth Judea. 15 Judas by night slayeth many. 18 Eupator's purpose is defeated. 23 He maketh peace with Judas.

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IN the hundred forty and ninth year it was told Judas, that Antiochus Eupator was coming with a great power into Judea,

^a ch. II. 1.

2 and with him ^a Lysias his protector, and ruler of his affairs, having either of them a Grecian power of footmen, an hundred and ten thousand, and horse-

43—45. The circumstances here mentioned are not recorded in the First Book of the Maccabees (v. 58, &c.), or in the Fifth Book (x.), where the same portion of the history is dealt with.

It appears that the writer of this book was of opinion that persons who had died godly deaths, having fallen in a holy cause, might be helped by offerings and prayers on their behalf to God ; and that he believed that Judas Maccabæus had entertained the same opinion, and had acted upon it.

But this book is no part of Canonical Scripture ; and the opinions of men, however brave, are not to be received as a guide to our conduct, and to be placed on a level with commands of God. It is remarkable that, although in the Canonical Scriptures there are many records of sorrow for great men dying for a good cause, and not exempt from human frailties, there is no mention of any such act on their behalf as is specified here. This silence is eloquent. The writer of this note may, perhaps, be allowed to refer to his *Twelve Addresses*, 1873, pp. 121—127, and his note on Jer. vii. 30, for further remarks on this subject.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. "In the hundred forty and ninth year." According to 1 Macc. vi. 20, &c., this happened in the 150th year. Some expositors explain this by saying that the author of that book began his year with the month Nisan ; and of this book with Tisri.

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men five thousand and three hundred, and elephants two and twenty, and three hundred chariots armed with hooks.

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3 Menelaus also joined himself with them, and with great dissimulation encouraged Antiochus, not for the safeguard of the country, but because he thought to have been made governor.

4 But the King of kings moved Antiochus' mind against this wicked wretch, and Lysias informed the king that this man was the cause of all mischief, so that the king commanded to bring him unto Berea, and to put him to death, as the manner is in that place.

5 Now there was in that place a tower of fifty cubits high, full of ashes, and it had a round instrument, which on every side hanged down into the ashes.

6 And whosoever was condemned of sacrilege, or had committed any other grievous crime, there did all men thrust him unto death.

7 Such a death it happened that wicked man to die, not having so much as burial in the earth; and that most justly:

8 for inasmuch as he had committed many sins about the altar, whose fire and ashes were holy, he received his death in ashes.

9 Now the king came with a barbarous and haughty mind to do far worse to the Jews, than had been done in his father's time.

10 Which things when Judas perceived, he commanded the multitude to call upon the Lord night and day, that if ever at any other time, he would now also help them, being at the point to be put from their law, from their country, and from the holy temple:

11 and that he would not suffer the people, that

2. "Hooks." Sickles.

3. "Menelaus." The renegade high priest (iv. 10, 24, &c.; v. 15.).

4. "Berea." Between Hierapolis and Antioch; probably where Aleppo now is.

5. "Ashes." Glowing embers.

"A round instrument." A revolving machine.

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² Or, *had had*
a little re-
spite.

² had even now been but a little refreshed, to be in subjection to the blasphemous nations.

12 So when they had all done this together, and besought the merciful Lord with weeping and fasting, and lying flat upon the ground three days long, Judas, having exhorted them, commanded they should be in a readiness.

13 And Judas, being apart with the elders, determined, before the king's host should enter into Judea, and get the city, to go forth and try the matter *in fight* by the help of the Lord.

³ Or, *Lord.*

14 So when he had committed *all* to the ³ Creator of the world, and exhorted his soldiers to fight manfully, even unto death, for the laws, the temple, the city, the country, and the commonwealth, he camped by Modin :

15 and having given the watchword to them that were about him, Victory is of God ; with the most valiant and choice young men he went in into the king's tent by night, and slew in the camp about four thousand men, and the chiefest of the elephants, with all that were upon him.

16 And at last they filled the camp with fear and tumult, and departed with good success.

17 This was done in the break of the day, because the protection of the Lord did help him.

18 Now when the king had taken a taste of the manliness of the Jews, he went about to take the holds by policy,

19 and marched toward Bethsura, which was a strong hold of the Jews : but he was put to flight; failed, and lost of his men :

20 for Judas had conveyed unto them that were in it such things as were necessary.

21 But Rhodocus, who was in the Jews' host, disclosed the secrets to the enemies ; therefore he was sought out, and when they had gotten him, they put him in prison.

15. "All that were upon him." The multitude that were in the wooden tower on the elephant's back. Compare 1 Macc. vi. 37. There might be two or three stories in the tower. Milton (*Par. Reg.*, iii. 329.) speaks of "elephants indorsed with towers of archers" (Parthian).

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22 The king treated with them in Bethsura the second time, gave his hand, took their's, departed, fought with Judas, was overcome ;

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23 heard that Philip, who was left over the affairs in Antioch, ² was desperately bent, confounded, in-² treated the Jews, submitted himself, and sware to all equal conditions, agreed with them, and offered sacrifice, honoured the temple, and dealt kindly with the place,

24 and accepted well of Maccabeus, made him principal governor from Ptolemais unto the Gerrhenians ;

25 came to Ptolemais : the people there were grieved for the covenants ; for they stormed, because they would make their covenants void :

26 Lysias went up to the judgment seat, said as much as could be in defence of the cause, persuaded, pacified, made them well affected, returned to Antioch. Thus it went touching the king's coming and departing.

CHAPTER XIV.

6 Alcimus accuseth Judas. 18 Nicanor maketh peace with Judas. 39 He seeketh to take Razis, 46 who, to escape his hands, killeth himself.

AFTER three years was Judas informed, that Demetrius the son of Seleucus, ^a having entered by ^a the haven of Tripolis with a great power and navy,

2 had taken the country, and killed Antiochus, and Lysias his protector.

3 Now ^b one Alcimus, who had been high priest, and had defiled himself wilfully in the times of their mingling with the Gentiles, seeing that by no means

23. "Confounded." Was confounded. Observe the unconnected style of vv. 22—26.

24. "Gerrhenians." Perhaps on the frontier of Egypt.

CHAPTER XIV.

Compare 1 Macc. vii.

1. "Three years." From the beginning of Eupator's reign.

"Demetrius." Soter.

3. "Alcimus," the renegade high priest (see 1 Macc. vii. 5.), had accused Judas Maccabæus as a traitor.

"In the times of their mingling with the Gentiles." Compare ver.

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he could save himself, nor have any more access to the holy altar,

² Or, *thought to be of the temple.*

4 came to king Demetrius in the hundred and one and fiftieth year, presenting unto him a crown of gold, and a palm, and also of the boughs which were ² used solemnly in the temple: and so that day he held his peace.

5 Howbeit, having gotten opportunity to further his foolish enterprize, *and* being called into counsel by Demetrius, and asked how the Jews stood affected, and what they intended, he answered thereunto:

6 Those of the Jews that be called Assideans, whose captain is Judas Maccabeus, nourish war, and are seditious, and will not let the realm be in peace.

7 Therefore I, being deprived of mine ancestors' honour, I mean the high priesthood, am now come hither:

8 first, verily for the unfeigned care I have of things pertaining to the king; and secondly, even for that I intend the good of mine own countrymen: for all our nation is in no small misery through the unadvised dealing of them aforesaid.

9 Wherefore, O king, seeing thou knowest all these things, be careful for the country, and our nation, which is pressed on every side, according to the clemency that thou readily shewest unto all.

10 For as long as Judas liveth, it is not possible that the state should be quiet.

11 This was no sooner spoken of him, but others of the king's friends, being maliciously set against Judas, did more incense Demetrius.

12 And forthwith calling Nicanor, who had been master of the elephants, and making him governor
^{c1 Macc. 7. 26.} over Judea, ^e he sent him forth,

13 commanding him to slay Judas, and to scatter them that were with him, and to make Alcimus high priest of the great temple.

38. This phrase is derived from Ps. cvi. 35, "they were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works."

4. "Boughs." Of olive. The crown betokened royalty; the palm, victory; the olive, peace.

6. "Assideans." See 1 Macc. ii. 42; vii. 13.

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14 Then the heathen, that had fled out of Judea from Judas, came to Nicanor by flocks, thinking the harm and calamities of the Jews to be their welfare.

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15 Now when the Jews heard of Nicanor's coming, and that the heathen ² were up against them, they cast earth upon their heads, and made supplication to him that had established his people for ever, and who always helpeth his portion with manifestation of his presence.

² Or, were
joined to
them.

16 So at the commandment of the captain they removed straightways from thence, and came near unto them at the town of Dessau.

17 Now Simon, Judas' brother, had joined battle with Nicanor, but was somewhat discomfited through the sudden silence of his enemies.

18 Nevertheless Nicanor, hearing of the manliness of them that were with Judas, and the courageousness that they had to fight for their country, durst not try the matter by the sword.

19 Wherefore he sent Posidonius, and Theodotus, and Mattathias, to make peace.

20 So when they had taken long advisement thereupon, and the captain had made the multitude acquainted therewith, and it appeared that they were all of one mind, they consented to the covenants,

21 and appointed a day to meet in together by themselves: and when the day came, and stools were set for either of them,

22 Judas placed armed men ready in convenient places, lest some treachery should be suddenly practised by the enemies: so they made a peaceable conference.

23 Now Nicanor abode in Jerusalem, and did no hurt, but sent away the people that came flocking unto him.

24 And he would not willingly have Judas out of his sight: for he loved the man from his heart.

16. "Dessau." The site is not known.

17. "Sudden silence of his enemies." The sudden dumb-panic produced (in his own troops) by the unexpected assault of their enemies.

21. "When the day came." Rather, and he (Judas) came forward, and on either side they set seats of dignity.

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² Or, *lived
together with
him.*

25 He prayed him also to take a wife, and to beget children : so he married, was quiet, and ² took part of this life.

26 But Alcimus, perceiving the love that was betwixt them, and considering the covenants that were made, came to Demetrius, and told him that Nicanor was not well affected toward the state ; for that he had ordained Judas, a traitor to his realm, to be the king's successor.

27 Then the king being in a rage, and provoked with the accusations of the most wicked man, wrote to Nicanor, signifying that he was much displeased with the covenants, and commanding him that he should send Maccabeus prisoner in all haste unto Antioch.

28 When this came to Nicanor's hearing, he was much confounded in himself, and took it grievously that he should make void the articles which were agreed upon, the man being in no fault.

29 But because there was no dealing against the king, he watched his time to accomplish this thing by policy.

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30 Notwithstanding, when Maccabeus saw that Nicanor began to be churlish unto him, and that he entreated him more roughly than he was wont, perceiving that such sour behaviour came not of good, he gathered together not a few of his men, and withdrew himself from Nicanor.

d 1 Macc. 7.
31, &c.

31 But the other, knowing that he was notably prevented by Judas' policy, ^d came into the great and holy temple, and commanded the priests, that were offering their usual sacrifices, to deliver him the man.

32 And when they swore that they could not tell where the man was whom he sought,

33 he stretched out his right hand toward the temple, and made an oath in this manner : If ye

25. "Of this life." In social life, as a married man.

31. "Into." Rather, "unto" the outer court.

33. "He stretched out his right hand." On the consequences of these blasphemous threats, see xv. 30—35.

"The temple." The sanctuary.

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will not deliver me Judas as ² a prisoner, I will lay this temple of God even with the ground, and I will break down the altar, and erect a notable temple ² unto Bacchus.

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Gr. bound.

34 After these words he departed. Then the priests lifted up their hands toward heaven, and besought him that was ever a defender of their nation, saying in this manner ;

35 Thou, O Lord of all things, who hast need of nothing, wast pleased that the temple of thine habitation should be among us :

36 therefore now, O holy Lord of all holiness, keep this house ever undefiled, which lately was cleansed, and stop every unrighteous mouth.

37 Now was there accused unto Nicanor one Razis, one of the elders of Jerusalem, a lover of his countrymen, and a man of very good report, who for his kindness was called a father of the Jews.

38 For in the former times, when they mingled not themselves with the Gentiles, he had been accused of Judaism, and did boldly jeopard his body and life with all vehemency for the religion of the Jews.

39 So Nicanor, willing to declare the hate that he bare unto the Jews, sent above five hundred men of war to take him :

40 for he thought by taking him to do the Jews much hurt.

41 Now when the multitude would have taken the tower, and violently broken into the outer door, and bade that fire should be brought to burn it, he being ready to be taken on every side fell upon his sword ;

42 choosing rather to die manfully, than to come

37—46. On this act of Razis, which was cited by the Donatists of old as a plea for self-destruction, see St. Augustine, *Contra Gaudent.* i. 31; and *Epist. ad Dulcitium*, Epist. 204. He observes :—

1. That this Book of the Maccabees is no part of the Hebrew Canonical Scriptures received by Christ.

2. That the act of Razis is not represented in this book as “*bonum factum, sed magnum factum* ;” that his “*mors est mirabilior quam prudentior*.”

3. That this act, being contrary to God’s will and word (which says “*thou shalt not kill*”), is not to be approved and imitated.

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into the hands of the wicked, to be abused otherwise than beseemed his noble birth :

43 but missing his stroke through haste, the multitude also rushing within the doors, he ran boldly up to the wall, and cast himself down manfully among the thickest of them.

44 But they quickly giving back, and a space being made, he fell down into the midst of the void place.

45 Nevertheless, while there was yet breath within him, being inflamed with anger, he rose up ; and though his blood gushed out like spouts of water, and his wounds were grievous, yet he ran through the midst of the throng ; and standing upon a steep rock,

46 when as his blood was now quite gone, he plucked out his bowels, and taking them in both his hands, he cast them upon the throng, and calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to restore him those again, he thus died.

CHAPTER XV.

5 Nicanor's blasphemy. 8 Judas encourageth his men by his dream.
28 Nicanor is slain.

BUT Nicanor, hearing that Judas and his company were in the strong places about Samaria, resolved without any danger to set upon them on the sabbath day.

2 Nevertheless the Jews that were compelled to go with him said, O destroy not so cruelly and barbarously, but give honour to that day, which he, that seeth all things, hath honoured with holiness above *other days*.

3 Then the most ungracious wretch demanded, if there were a Mighty one in heaven, that had commanded the sabbath day to be kept.

4 And when they said, There is in heaven a living Lord, and mighty, who commanded the seventh day to be kept :

5 then said the other, And I also am mighty upon earth, and I command to take arms, and to do the king's business. Yet he obtained not to have his wicked will done.

6 So Nicanor in exceeding pride and haughtiness

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determined to set up a publick monument of his victory over Judas and them that were with him.

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7 But Maccabeus had ever sure confidence that the Lord would help him:

8 wherefore he exhorted his people not to fear the coming of the heathen against them, but to remember the help which in former times they had received from heaven, and now to expect the victory and aid, which should come unto them from the Almighty.

9 And so comforting them out of the law and the prophets, and withal putting them in mind of the battles that they won afore, he made them more cheerful.

10 And when he had stirred up their minds, he gave them their charge, shewing them therewithal the falsehood of the heathen, and the breach of oaths.

11 Thus he armed every one of them, not so much with defence of shields and spears, as with comfortable and good words: and beside that, he told them a dream worthy to be believed, as if it had been so indeed, which did not a little rejoice them.

12 And this was his vision: That Onias, who had been high priest, a virtuous and a good man, reverend in conversation, gentle in condition, well spoken also, and exercised from a child in all points of virtue, holding up his hands prayed for the whole body of the Jews.

13 This done, in like manner there appeared a man with gray hairs, and exceeding glorious, who was of a wonderful and excellent majesty.

14 Then Onias answered, saying, This is a lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the people, and for the holy city, *to wit*, Jeremias the prophet of God.

CHAPTER XV.

12. "Onias." The good high priest (iii. 1; v. 4.).

13. "A man with gray hairs." Jeremiah the prophet (ver. 14.), who had prayed for his people.

14. "Prayeth much." Compare St. Luke xvi. 27, &c.; Rev. vi. 9, 10, on the consciousness and prayers of the souls of departed saints.

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15 Whereupon Jeremias holding forth his right hand gave to Judas a sword of gold, and in giving it spake thus,

16 Take this holy sword, a gift from God, with the which thou shalt wound the adversaries.

17 Thus being well comforted by the words of Judas, which were very good, and able to stir them up to valour, and to encourage the hearts of the young men, they determined not to pitch camp, but courageously to set upon them, and manfully to try the matter by conflict, because the city and the sanctuary and the temple were in danger.

18 For the care that they took for their wives, and their children, their brethren, and kinsfolks, was in least account with them: but the greatest and principal fear was for the holy temple.

19 Also they that were in the city took not the least care, being troubled for the conflict abroad.

20 And now, when as all looked what should be the trial, and the enemies were already come near, and the army was set in array, and the beasts conveniently placed, and the horsemen set in wings,

21 Maccabeus seeing the coming of the multitude, and the divers preparations of armour, and the fierceness of the beasts, stretched out his hands toward heaven, and called upon the Lord that worketh wonders, knowing that victory cometh not by arms, but even as it seemeth good to him, he giveth it to such as are worthy:

22 therefore in his prayer he said after this manner; O Lord, ^athou didst send thine angel in the time of Ezekias king of Judea, and didst slay in the host of Sennacherib an hundred fourscore and five thousand:

^a 1 Macc. 7.
40, 41.
ch. 8. 19.

23 wherefore now also, O Lord of heaven, send a good angel before us for a fear and dread unto them;

24 and through the might of thine arm let those be stricken with terror, that come against thy holy people to blaspheme. And he ended thus.

18. "In least." Rather, in lesser.

19. "The least care." No slight anxiety.

20. "The beasts." Elephants.

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25 Then Nicanor and they that were with him came forward with trumpets and songs.

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26 But Judas and his company encountered the enemies with invocation and prayer.

27 So that fighting with their hands, and praying unto God with their hearts, they slew no less than thirty and five thousand men: for through the appearance of God they were greatly cheered.

28 Now when the battle was done, returning again with joy, they knew that ^b Nicanor lay dead in his harness. ^{b 1 Macc. 7. 43.}

29 Then they made a great shout and a noise, praising the Almighty in their own language.

30 And *Judas*, who was ever the chief defender of the citizens both in body and mind, and who continued his love toward his countrymen all his life, commanded to ^c strike off Nicanor's head, and his hand with his shoulder, and bring them to Jerusalem. ^{c 1 Macc. 7. 47.}

31 So when he was there, and had called them of his nation together, and set the priests before the altar, he sent for them that were of the tower,

32 and shewed them vile Nicanor's head, and the hand of that blasphemer, ^d which with proud brags he had stretched out against the holy temple of the Almighty. ^{d ch. 14. 33.}

33 And when he had cut out the tongue of that ungodly Nicanor, he commanded that they should give it by pieces unto the fowls, and hang up the reward of his madness before the temple.

34 So every man praised toward the heaven the glorious Lord, saying, Blessed be he that hath kept his own place undefiled.

35 He hanged also Nicanor's head upon the tower, an evident and manifest sign unto all of the help of the Lord.

36 And ^e they ordained all with a common decree in no case to let that day pass without solemnity, but to celebrate the thirteenth day of the twelfth ^{e 1 Macc. 7. 49.}

25. "Songs." Of victory.

30. "Continued his love." The love of his adult youth.

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† Esth. 9, 17,
21.

month, which in the Syrian tongue is called Adar, the day before 'Mardocheus' day.

37 Thus went it with Nicanor: and from that time forth the Hebrews had the city in their power. And here will I make an end.

38 And if *I have done* well, and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired: but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto.

39 For as it is hurtful to drink wine or water alone; and as wine mingled with water is pleasant, and delighteth the taste: even so speech finely framed delighteth the ears of them that read the story. And here shall be an end.

36. "Mardocheus' day." The Feast of Purim (Esth. ix. 28—32.).

This victory of Judas Maccabæus over Nicanor was commemorated not only by "Nicanor's Day," but (as is said by some) by "Nicanor's Gate:" the gate at the Eastern entrance of the inner court of the Temple, where the hand was nailed with which he had threatened to destroy it.

38. "And if I have done well . . . attain unto." This sentence seems to be imitated from *Æschines against Ctesiphon*, at the end.

THE END OF THE APOCRYPHA.

The following CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE of the principal events in Jewish history in the times of ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, king of Syria, may serve to illustrate the History of the MACCABEES:—

B.C.

175. (= the 137th year of the Era of the Greeks), Antiochus Epiphanes, younger son of Antiochus the Great, usurps the throne of Syria.
At Jerusalem, Jason, who assumed this Greek name instead of his name Jesus, supplants his brother Onias in the Priesthood, which he buys of Antiochus (2 Macc. iv. 7—11. *Joseph. Antiq.* xii. 6).
174. Apostate Jews, assisted by the High Priest, introduce Gentile customs and set up Gentile schools at Jerusalem, and send offerings to the Tyrian Hercules (1 Macc. i. 15—21. 2 Macc. iv. 12—18. *Joseph. Antiq.* xii. 5. 1).
173. Conflict between Antiochus and his nephew Ptolemy Philometor for Coele-Syria and Palestine.
172. Menelaus (who assumed this Greek name instead of his name Onias) supplants his brother Jason in the priesthood, which he buys of Antiochus (2 Macc. iv. 23—25. *Joseph. Ant.* xii. 5. 1; xv. 3).
171. Antiochus defeats the forces of Ptolemy his nephew, the youthful king of Egypt, near Pelusium. He professes friendship for his nephew in order to deceive him and despoil him of his kingdom. He overruns a great part of Egypt (1 Macc. i. 16—19).
170. The Jews having heard a false rumour of the death of Antiochus, attack his garrison at Jerusalem.
Antiochus besieges and takes Jerusalem, puts 40,000 Jews to the sword and sells 40,000; enters the Temple, being conducted into it by the renegade Priest and traitor Menelaus; spoils it of its sacred vessels, sacrifices swine on the altar, and sprinkles the Temple with the broth made of their flesh (1 Macc. i. 23, 24. 2 Macc. v. 11—16. *Joseph. Ant.* xiii. 16. *Sulp. Sever. Hist.* ii. 18. *Phot. Bibl.* 244).
168. Antiochus having returned into Egypt, and being near Alexandria, is commanded by the Roman Envoy, C. Popilius, to retire from Egypt (*Polyb. Legat.* 92. *Vell. Patere.* i. 10. *Val. Max.* vi. 4. *Justin, Hist.* xxxiv. 3).

Antiochus Epiphanes, two years after he himself had plundered the Temple, sends Apollonius, his Collector of Taxes, to Jerusalem with an army of 22,000 men, and with orders to kill all the adults and to sell into slavery all women and children. Apollonius, on the Sabbath day, plunders and destroys a great part of the city, and kills many of the inhabitants, and carries others into captivity. A fortress is built by the Syrians in the city of David, where they deposited the plunder of the Temple, and where a Syrian garrison

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

was quartered (1 Macc. i. 30—42. 2 Macc. v. 24—26. *Joseph. Ant.* xii. 7).

Judas Maccabæus and others retire to the mountains, in order to escape the pollutions of idolatrous worship and “the desolation of the sanctuary” and the “taking away of the daily sacrifice,” *three years and a half* before the cleansing of the Temple by him, and the institution of the Feast of Dedication (1 Macc. i. 39—41; iv. 43, 54. 2 Macc. v. 27. *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* i. 1. *Ussher, Ann.* p. 323).

Antiochus enforces conformity to the Greek religion (1 Macc. i. 43—53); orders the Temple at Jerusalem to be called the Temple of Jupiter Olympius (2 Macc. vi. 1, 2); and commands idolatrous altars to be built, and idolatrous sacrifices to be offered there and in other cities of Judah: forbids circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath and holy days, and makes it criminal to profess the Hebrew religion (1 Macc. i. 43, 46—51. 2 Macc. vi. 6—9).

Many Jews fall away from the faith, and become worshippers of Dionysus, and carry ivy in processions in his honour (2 Macc. vi. 7). The heathen pollute the Courts of the Temple with the grossest impurities (2 Macc. vi. 4, 5), and burn the copies of the Scriptures (1 Macc. i. 56—58).

On the 15th day of Cisleu (corresponding to the latter half of November and the first half of December) in B.C. 168, “the abomination of Desolation” (the altar of Jupiter Olympius) is set up on the altar in the Temple (1 Macc. i. 57). On the 25th Cisleu idolatrous sacrifices are offered on the idolatrous altar set up on the altar of God (1 Macc. i. 59).

167. Many Jews remain firm, and die as Martyrs, especially the Priest Eleazar, ninety years of age (2 Macc. vi. 18—31), and Razis the Jewish Senator (2 Macc. xiv. 37), and the mother and seven sons at Antioch (2 Macc. vii.), who are called Maccabees from their elder brother. The Christian Church celebrated the Festival of the Maccabees, in the East and the West, in the fourth century on Aug. 1; and sermons preached on that day are extant in the works of *S. Chrysostom*, *S. Greg. Nazianzen*, *S. Leo*, and *S. Augustine* (*Bingham*, xx. c. vii.).

The Priest Mattathias and his five sons, also called Maccabees, the principal of whom was Judas Maccabæus, dwell at Modin, near Diospolis (1 Macc. ii. 1—5, 66; iii. 4, 9; iv. 1—26); they are joined by the *Assidæi* or religious ones (1 Macc. ii. 42—48).

166. Mattathias dies (1 Macc. ii. 49—70); Judas Maccabæus his son prays to God and is strengthened (2 Macc. viii. 1—4). Antiochus Epiphanes celebrates the festal games with almost incredible splendour and luxury at Daphne, near Antioch in Syria; described by *Polybius* in *Athen.* v. 4; x. 10. *Ussher*, pp. 331, 332. Many thousands

TO THE MACCABEES.

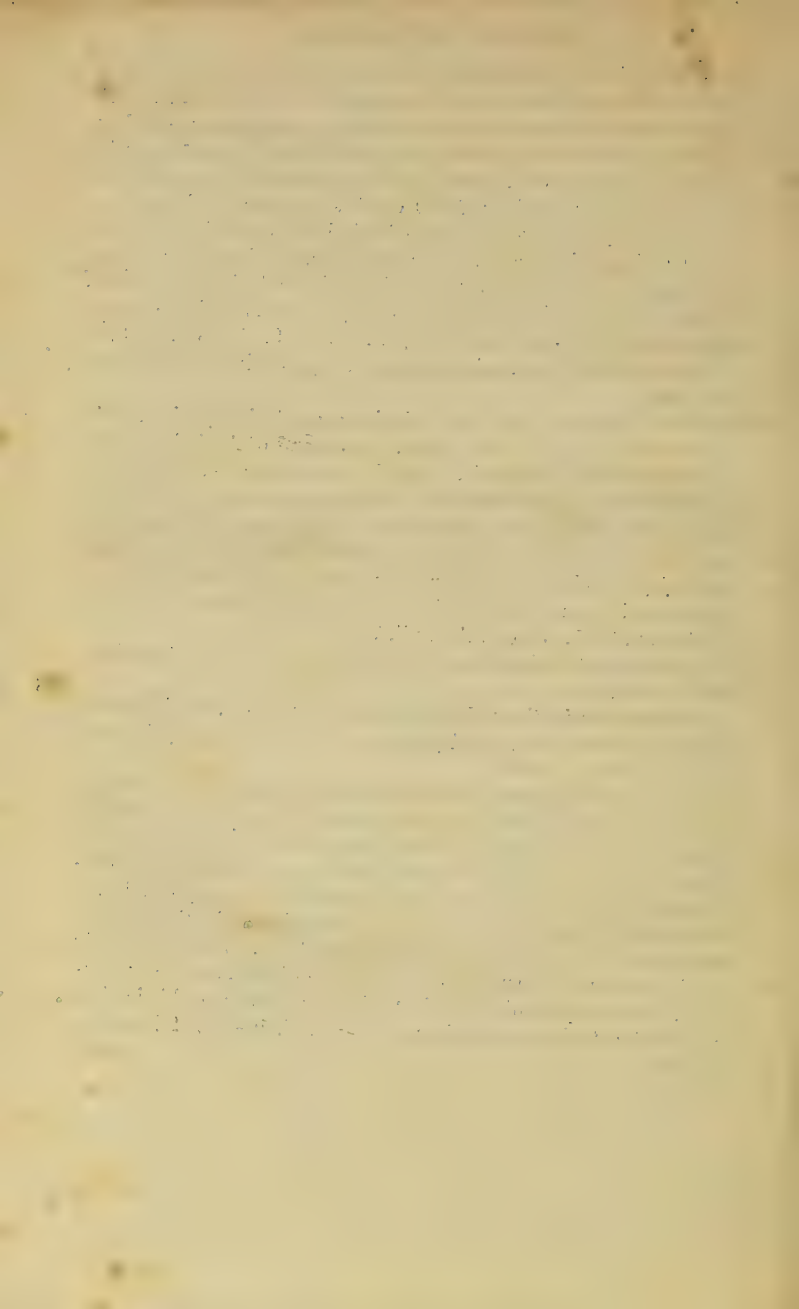
of soldiers, infantry and cavalry, crowned with golden crowns and bearing silver shields, and clad in purple and embroidered cloaks; 1,000 oxen as victims; images of gods and goddesses; 600 boys bearing golden vessels; 200 women sprinkling the spectators with perfume; women on golden litters; gladiatorial spectacles for thirty days in succession; 1,000 couches for guests at banquets—such were some of the features of this brilliant festival. In the midst of it the king acted like a buffoon and a libertine; and at this time a reverse of fortune awaited him and his end was near. In the midst of this magnificent display Judas Maccabæus is preparing to deliver Jerusalem (*Joseph. Ant. xii. 9. 1 Macc. iii. 8, 9. 2 Macc. viii. 6, 7*), and gains a great victory over Nicanor (*2 Macc. viii. 24*).

165. Judas Maccabæus prays and obtains a great victory with 10,000 men against 65,000 under Lysias, the general of Antiochus. Antiochus marches to Armenia. Judas Maccabæus recovers Jerusalem; overthrows the idol altars, and cleanses the sanctuary on the 25th day of Cisleu, and offers sacrifice there, *three years* after it had been polluted by the heathen, and keeps the "Feast of Dedication" with great joy for eight days, after the manner of the Feast of Tabernacles, and restores the worship of the Temple (*1 Macc. iv. 42—59. 2 Macc. x. 3—7. Joseph. Ant. xii. 7. 5*).

The persecution itself lasted *three years and a half*. See above on B.C. 168.

The nations in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Tyrians are much enraged against the Jews (*1 Macc. v. 1—15*).

164. Antiochus Epiphanes in Persia, at Ecbatana, receives the tidings announcing the defeat of his army under Lysias by Judas Maccabæus, and the recovery of Jerusalem, and the Dedication of the Temple. He is transported with violent rage, and orders his charioteer to get ready his horses and chariot that he may march into Judæa, and boasts that he will make Jerusalem to be the grave of the Jews (*1 Macc. vi. 4—7. 2 Macc. ix. 3, 4*). Soon afterwards he is seized with a sudden and loathsome disease, and dies miserably, declaring that his death is coming as a penalty for his impiety against the God of the Hebrews (*1 Macc. vi. 10—16. 2 Macc. ix. 11—28*).



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